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ABSTRACT

Drama in the classroom is the theme of the 14 articles in this issue, which can be used as resource material for teachers concerned with incorporating drama into the English curriculum. Titles and authors are as follows: "All the World is a Stage--Except the American Classroom" (Charles R. Duke); "A Drama Program for All Seasons" (Paul Cervoni and Mary K. Cervoni); "Curriculum Drama: Does It Have a Place in English for the 80's?" (Denny T. Wolfe, Jr.); "Drama Without Fear" (Chris Howard Bailey); "Resource" (Nancy Rabianski); "Drama in the Middle School Classroom" (Margaret Queenan); "Drama in Support of the English Curriculum" (Keith Cunningham); "Using Dramatics with Literature" (Mary Ann Reynolds); "Making Connections: Theater and English" (Helen Sheehy); "Role Playing: Teaching Literature Dramatically" (Norma Walrath); "Why Didn't They Listen" (Margaret Grove Ferry); "Lions, and Tigers, and English, Oh My!" (Allison B. Spitzer); "Converting Narrative into Drama: Using the Composing Process to Integrate the Language Arts" (Robert Blake); and "Radio Play Production" (Paul P. Corwel). Student-written paperback reviews of young adult fiction are included. (EL)

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DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM: WHAT NOW?

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PREFACE

Perhaps the question, "Drama in the Classroom: What Now?" has no answer. In one sense, so eloquently advocated by Dorothy Heathcote, drama is with us always. Each time we imagine a future event, each time we retell experience, we perform a drama with ourselves as the leading characters. We people our minds with the voices and the actions of our dreams and fears. The student's nightmare of the missed test, the empty classroom, the failed exam, is drama. The mental rehearsal of today's lesson is drama. The very substance of thought casts itself as drama.

For the contributors to this issue of CEJ the classroom is not too small to encompass the texture of students' experience and imagination expressed through dramatic activity. They find room to act out, to create with the body as well as with words. They can fight without knives, grow flowers without soil and sun, walk on any street, give life to books.

But how do we examine this drama? How do we analyze it? Which of the multiple choices will reveal its effects? Sad, is it not, that the competency exam is too small for the whole sentence. The exam tests the subjects and omits the verbs--the actions. We know what we can spell, but we do not know what we can do. The articles in this issue of CEJ, though, show us that we and our students can do much more than we sometimes suppose.

The starring parts in each issue of CEJ are played by the contributors, but others, too, deserve special recognition for outstanding performances in supporting roles: Don Gallo as Paperback Review Editor, Judy Doyle of Curbstone Press as Title Setter, and Doris Hagearty of Secretarial Service of Newington as Master Typist.

Diane Shugert

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All The World Is A Stage—Except The American Classroom

Charles R. Duke

Everywhere we turn these days, we find drama. Whether it is in the many scenes and acts of an international diplomatic crisis, the "impromptu" gatherings the President of the United States has for congressmen at Camp David, or the thoughts of a teacher waiting by the telephone to hear if she or he will be rehired--the "stuff" of drama is always with us. Well, almost always. When we step into classrooms, such "stuff" is usually left behind because we concentrate on drills for basic competency tests and on making sure we cover all the material so the district will get better funded next year. Where has all the drama gone? And, more specifically, where has all the creative drama gone?

A quick flashback to 1966 reminds us of the Dartmouth Conference which brought British and American educators together to discuss their different approaches to the teaching of English; one of the most arresting discoveries at the conference was the extent to which drama played a part in the learning of British young people. It seemed after Dartmouth as if everyone was talking about drama and how it might be used. Dorothy Heathcote, one of the most successful British practitioners of drama in the classroom, suggested that we consciously employ elements of drama to educate--to literally bring out what children already know but don't yet know they know. Heathcote even came to America to help teachers become better acquainted with drama as an integral part of the learning process. Books were written, workshops held, materials developed--most notably the James Moffet Interaction Series. It was a fine time, an exciting time. Yet here we are and where is the drama? Few teachers are using it; few publishers have any interest in it; and professional journals rarely carry articles about it.

What went wrong? Like most shifts in educational practice and theory, this one is difficult to pinpoint. But we can offer some suggestions as to what might have caused drama as a learning process to disappear, particularly at the secondary level. Elementary teachers, of course, have long used a number of elements from drama--role playing, mime, readers' theatre, improvisation--and they continue to do so, but not to a large degree. Secondary teachers were the ones who became the primary focus of the drama push in the late 1960's, and they are the ones for whom the curtain

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Charles R. Duke, author of Creative Dramatics and English Teaching (NCTE, 1974), is a former President of the New England Association of Teachers of English. He now teaches English at Murray State University in Kentucky.

seems to have dropped most finally on the drama.

Perhaps the best way to assess what went astray is to focus on one or two key issues which seem to have overshadowed most of the others and to place these in the context of American education and teacher training.

1. Creative drama is not a subject.

The term "drama" may have contributed to the demise of creative drama. So many people equated "drama" with theatre in the formal, traditional sense that it was difficult for them to perceive it in any other way. Drama was plays; plays were to be read in the classroom or performed by the senior class to raise money; if there was no script, it was not drama. Since creative drama is actually a process of improvisation--interacting in and creating spontaneous responses to situations of conflict or ambiguity--it may never occur exactly the same way twice. Hundreds of versions of the same basic situation might occur all over the country, each tailored to the particular needs, abilities and interests of the students engaged in the development of the response. Such responses might never play to a conventional audience, for everyone might be involved in the response. Creative drama can occur at any grade level in any subject field with any group of students, regardless of ability. It was this absence of the conventions usually associated with drama as theater which caused difficulties for creative drama; it simply did not fit into the traditional mold. How could it become a part of the curriculum?

Those of us who advocated the use of drama as part of the learning process underestimated the powerful connotations associated with drama. Far too many teachers, presented with the idea of drama as a process for learning, thought they would have to be accomplished actors or actresses before they could use creative drama as a learning technique. The truth is, the process probably works better with students if the teacher has no formal theater experience; that way, the teacher draws upon natural instincts and the skills developed in group work within the classroom to serve more as a catalyst than a director. But all of this called for changes in attitude. Unlike the funded programs now being conducted to assist teachers in understanding the written process, no consistent nation-wide program emerged for developing the dramatic process. As a result, relatively few teachers ever got sufficiently comfortable with the process to use it regularly.

It was American educators, in an effort to distinguish between drama as subject and drama as process, who began to use the term "creative dramatics." That possibly was a mistake, for, again, there are some people who have powerful associations with the word "creative" in a classroom setting. Many teachers and lay people have come to believe that "creative" means doing anything a person wants to and that little or no control is involved. That's why, for example, creative writing is often looked at askance. To some individuals, creative writing is viewed as "doing something imaginative," usually for the fun of it. The element of fun is important in any learning endeavor, but creativity, whether in drama or writing, calls for more than fun. It demands concentration and discipline to find and bring to some kind of fruition an idea, a subject, or perspective which has some significance for the creator and, ultimately, perhaps, an audience. The creative process is an arduous one. Writers know this. Artists know this, and so do engineers, doctors, dress designers, housewives, mechanics and farmers. Most of what we do in everyday life--whether it is to develop a grocery list for a limited budget, choose a color scheme for a living room or mow a lawn so it looks neat--requires varying degrees of creativity. But "creative" does imply that the creator is the one generating and developing the material--not others.

And that's where we got caught. From the dizziness of freedom of expression in the 1960's, we have suffered a backlash in the 70's and 80's. Self-expression became synonymous in the public's mind with self-indulgence--and look what IT has brought us! That backlash has caused many of us to return to a more structured and conventional approach to learning and teaching. "Creative" things are done on rainy days or on Fridays when we need a break--the rest of the time it is business as usual as we march along our continuum of skills and pages, failing to acknowledge that we may have left behind one of the most productive ways that anyone can learn: the idea that direct involvement and discovery lead to motivation and to retention of material learned.

We thought that educators would see the benefits of learning through a dramatic process as opposed to rote drill. But we failed to produce convincing results in terms of student achievement. We painted glowing pictures of students experiencing the freedom of discovery, but we never went on to test students to determine whether indeed, they learned as well as, if not better than, students taught in more conventional ways. In fact, the documented research of the effects of creative dramatics on skills development as well as acquisition of knowledge remains appallingly limited.

2. Creative drama failed because it calls for student-centered, not teacher-centered, learning.

Although education has paid considerable attention to student-centered learning, the concept seldom gets translated into effective, consistent practices within the classroom. This is not surprising, since many teacher education programs are so teacher-centered that they have done little to equip prospective teachers with a clear understanding of what "student-centered" means. Using the only models they know, teachers are reluctant to give up center stage in the classroom and let students have the freedom to develop their own learning experiences. Yet creative drama relies heavily on the ability of students to draw upon their own experiences and perceptions to create some kind of meaning. Whether it is a group of second graders trying to decide how flowers might react to nature's cycles or a high school social studies class exploring how the American colonists might have plotted their strategy in clandestine meetings prior to the break with the British--students need to grow from what they know to discover what they don't know.

Sitting in classrooms where nothing is done to encourage anything but passive receptivity of information, students fail to develop the problem-solving skills and the desire for exploration which will be of such value to them when they are on their own. In creative drama, students are the creators, the writers, the actors, and the audience. The teacher's role is one of catalyst and often participant. Since students are the creators, teachers do not have the script in advance. They, like the students, will have to respond spontaneously and creatively to the situation as it occurs. But we underestimated teachers and their need for security in the classroom. We thought that most teachers would be comfortable enough with their students so that role changes would not be a problem. We did not count on the overwhelming fear that many teachers seem to have of releasing themselves and their students from the prepared scripts to create their own. So, current practices legislate against such spontaneity. If the material is not in the approved text where everyone can see it, then it is suspect. Will it be on the district or state-wide tests? If not, then we can't take time for it.

3. Creative dramatics takes time.

In an educational system where clocks govern most of our actions and the emphasis is upon "coverage" of material, any approach which necessitates taking the time to establish an appropriate classroom environment, to develop process skills, and to be open-ended is bound to be viewed with suspicion. And creative drama takes time. Students cannot plunge into a dramatic activity without preparation; like athletes, they have to learn some basic skills before performing; like athletes, they have to warm up before moving into concentrated activity. This preparation time, long at first, shorter as students become more skilled, is troublesome for some teachers because they are conditioned to think a lesson has to start and stop within a given time period. But some dramatic activities may stretch over two or three days' time, with students doing bits and pieces along the way until a final version emerges. This gradual evolution of the product can be nerve-wracking if one is unaccustomed to how the process works. We fret that not eveything will get "covered" if we take the time. But what we overlook is that within the time taken for the dramatic activity, we may be reinforcing and developing many skills that might never be integrated any other way.

Creative drama calls upon listening skills, upon writing skills, upon reading skills, upon speaking skills--seldom do many classroom lessons in the traditional structure encourage this kind of integration. Because the dramatic process has no specific subject matter, it can be applied to a large number of areas. The word "drama" may suggest only literature, but drama as process is equally at home in the history, science, home economics, foreign language or business class.

So, here we are today, still believing that creative drama is an appropriate way to broaden our perspectives on learning and that students should be at the center of the learning process with the teacher there as a guide and resource, not solely as the director. Creative drama offered that option in the 1960's; it still offers the option in the 1980's and beyond. Some teachers accepted the challenge of integrating drama as a learning process into the curriculum; some, including the authors of the articles in this collection, are still doing it. But creative drama will never become a wide-spread part of the learning process in American schools until educators come to accept a much broader view of how learning occurs and until teachers themselves feel secure enough as individuals to let students have center stage in the classroom.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Waiting Games by Bruce and Carole Hart.
Avon Flare, 1981. 311 pp. $2.50.

The publication data summarizing *Waiting Games* says "Fourteen-year-old Jessie becomes romantically and sexually involved with her eighteen-year-old guitar teacher, Michael." As a bare bones summary, it is an accurate one, but this is unusual YA fiction in many ways. The novel is double the length of most. Jessie's parents are loving, understanding, happily married, and concerned about their daughter. Jessie's grandmother who lives with them is also a caring and understanding adult. Characters and plot are more fully developed than in most YA fiction, and several unrelated sub-plots are not dragged in to spice things up. The reader should be aware that *Waiting Games* is a sequel to *Sooner or Later* which needs to be read first. Specifically, *Waiting Games* is about Jessie's inner conflicts, first as to whether or not to have sexual relations with Michael, a handsome, popular, physically appealing young rock musician on his way up. Jessie yields to Michael for the first and only time on the eve of her fifteenth birthday. This comes halfway through the novel, before Michael's career and Jessie's family's summer plans separate the couple. The balance of the novel tells how Jessie deals with the emotional turmoil that results from her intimacy with Michael, with his sky-rocketing career, with their eventual break-up and her acceptance of this. Sexual intimacy for the very young woman is dealt with in a non-romanticized way. The increasing temptation, Jessie's realization that she is over her head, her discomfort at letting her parents down, the realization that her first experience was, to use her terms, "ow" rather than "wow," and the whole impact of the experience on her are well delineated. As girls are being faced with decisions regarding sexual intimacy younger and younger, *Waiting Games*, along with being a well-written novel, presents some aspects of the decision that "aren't reflected in today's films, popular songs and in much other YA fiction. This novel fills a gap in fiction for adolescents.

Reviewed by Marion Bradley, North Branford High School, North Branford, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

There's a Bat in Bunk Five by Paul Danziger.
Dell, 1982. 150 pp. $1.95.

This sequel to Danziger's *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* continues the adventures of fourteen-year-old Marcy Lewis as a Counselor-in-Training at a creative arts camp under the direction of Ms. Finney, her former English teacher. The summer finds Marcy maturing, discovering much about herself and her role in relation to others. To really enjoy and completely understand *There's a Bat in Bunk Five*, however, *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* should be read first. Girls in grades six through nine will probably most enjoy these books by Danziger. Her latest is easy to read, fast paced and has humor, suspense, romance, and conflict. It is not as shallow as many books of this genre and would be a popular addition to room or school library.

Reviewed by Marion D. Bradley, North Branford High School, North Branford, CT.

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A Drama Program For All Seasons

Paul Cervoni and Mary K. Cervoni

The use of theatre techniques in the regular English classroom, valuable and effective as they have proven, is largely dependent on two factors: the knowledge of and enthusiasm for such practices by teachers of those classrooms, and pressures brought to bear by "back-to-basics" and "no frill education" movements. Add to this a stream of reactionary retrenchments to the old, classical, "academic" pursuits and the forced curtailing of many high school elective programs and it is not hard to conclude that in some cases, at least, integration of dramatic activities into writing and literature classes may have achieved new lows.

Often during times of restrictive educational climates, many schools rely on the teaching of drama through literature classes and the extra-curricular school play. The school play, that highly-visible dramatic profile of a school, is by its very nature bound by certain restrictions. Even the most extravagant production is limited to the small percentage of students already possessing enough talent to qualify for its acting roles. Willingly or unwillingly, remaining students work on the directorial and production aspects of the play, or have no opportunity at all to engage in drama except as members of the audience.

Educators who believe that drama is adequately served through its study in literature class and the school play do not understand the importance of drama as a learning tool. They do not understand drama's richness in integrating and focusing the self in the individual, in cultivating the intelligence and in overcoming the excruciating pain of shyness and feelings of inadequacy. Above all, they do not recognize that the study of drama as a lively art is an academic one.

It is clear to us that the use of dramatic techniques to unlock the student's inner resources cannot be left to chance opportunities influenced by wavering educational climates. Senior high school curricula must create places for drama as a special study because drama creates a pool of skills and understandings not only for its students but also for the entire student body and faculty to use in school and life.

Mary K. Cervoni teaches drama and English at Trumbull High School. She is active in movement and improvisation groups.

Paul Cervoni chairs the Department of English at Trumbull High School, where he also teaches drama and English. He is President of the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English.

In order to graduate from our school, students must earn a credit in oral communications, choosing from one of two drama courses of a speech course. Our "Drama: Theatre Arts" course was generated on the philosophy that drama is an essential part of any high school curriculum and oral communications program. In a world of computers and technology, drama remains the medium through which an individual student's inner resources and creative abilities can be tapped and developed so that the student can stand on his or her feet and think and communicate effectively under many circumstances.

The primary concern of our course is with the individual. In Development Through Drama, (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1967, p. 3), Brian Way describes this development of people as drama's major aim:

> Education is concerned with individuals; drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence... 'No two people are alike' may well be an accepted truism of physical appearance, but it is equally true of emotion and imagination, which comprise the full root of individuality, and yet are often the antithesis of academic education, which inevitably (because of tests and examinations) tends to be concerned with the sameness rather than the differences of people. The differences are often most clearly reflected through the arts, and opportunity for actually 'doing' the arts is sometimes the wisest way of developing individuality.

Our own course concentrates on the development of individual student resources through creative exercises designed to achieve self-awareness, self-confidence, poise, dependability and maturity. Additionally, it operates on the philosophy that every student should have the opportunity to experience the lively art of drama exclusive of the traditional school play. The course proceeds through a series of carefully selected and executed theatre exercises requiring group teamwork and culminating in the performance of a one-act play.

In studying and portraying a wide selection of characters and ideas in plays, students continue to gain deeper insights into themselves and other people. At the same time they are sharpening their emotional and intellectual capacities and developing voice and body skills needed for everyday communications. As Shakespeare has Jacques say, "All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players." Additionally, skills learned in drama are basic to all literary and art forms and often manifest themselves in a more successful understanding of complex ideas and attitudes met in the literature of other courses. Finally, in obtaining a broad theater background, students develop standards of judgment through which they can recognize good and bad theater.

Our program is based on the following objectives. The first five center directly on the development of the individual, while the last six focus on both the individual and the structure of the course.

1. Cultivation of poise, self-confidence and a fluency of expression to develop an ease with one's self and the surrounding world.
2. Stimulation of the student's creative abilities, developing inner resources and imaginative experiences through improvisations and theatre games.
3. Providing social as well as individual development, including qualities that promote teamwork, cooperation, dependability and maturity.
4. Improving body coordination and vocal flexibility needed for everyday communication. Improving voice, diction, concentration and memorization.
5. Affording every student the opportunity to act in a play, regardless of his or her acting ability.
6. Introducing students to the study of a play not solely as literature, history or criticism, but as a play, giving them insight into its creative aspects and letting them get into it and make it live as theatre.
7. Treating a play as an experience in space with people interacting with each other and the audience.
8. Teaching the basic skills of acting and the basic elements, techniques, procedures and terms of drama, emphasizing the production as well as directorial aspects of the play.
9. Improving students' listening and critical skills and instilling standards of criticism for
    a. evaluating themselves as actors and actresses
    b. evaluating plays from the observer's point of view.
10. Instilling a sense of good taste through studying plays and acting in productions.
11. Instilling a love of theatre that will serve the student through a lifetime as an observer of plays or active stage participation.

In carrying out the preceding objectives, we work toward developing the following sequence of skills:

1. To develop the student's self-confidence and sense of security with other individuals through theatre games that emphasize loosening up.
2. To get students on their feet and moving around so that they can begin immediately to develop their bodies into expressive, controlled entities moving with awareness of space.
3. To sharpen students' powers of observation, concentration and emotion.
4. To move, speak and act in a convincing way and with proper motivation.
5. To handle special movement problems of the stage, using the space effectively and relating to other onstage individuals.
6. To increase speaking skills so that others will listen and understand. To develop proper enunciation, articulation, voice volume and intonation.

7. To transfer skills acquired from improvisational acting to acting with a script. To read a play effectively, analyze a character and play that character on stage.
8. To increase knowledge of the technical aspects of the theatre, including directing, producing, costuming, makeup, sets and lights.
9. To develop skills in dramatic criticism.

The first half of our ten week "Drama: Theatre Arts" course follows closely exercises geared toward developing inner resources in Fran Tanner's Basic Drama Projects (Twin Falls, Idaho: Clark Publishing Co., 1977). After spending only a portion of their first class listening to a course overview, students are asked to get on their feet, push all classroom furniture aside and move through the drama room interacting with themselves, the space, the teacher and other students. A series of body and voice warm-up exercises (head-rolling, stretching, arm swinging, yawning, jumping, marching) precedes each day's lesson, helping both the teacher and students relax and forget previous school experiences during that day.

Since the students we teach are often quite verbal but have very little experience with movement, the opening exercises are chosen to help them overcome their nervousness and to assess their experiences and feelings at the beginning of the course so they can remember them and compare them with their experiences and feelings at the end of the course. They must also connect these feelings and experiences with a sense of their physical selves, especially body movement and gesture and voice inflection, the basic tools of the actor and of every communicator. For example, students are asked to move around the periphery of the space, through the middle and through the center, noticing the different "feel" of each area and their own reactions to it, and the rate and amount of their breathing. Nervousness often causes breathholding, and controlled, easy movement goes together with controlled, open breathing. When they can do this much with some degree of comfort, reactions to the exercises are discussed and we note that no one has fainted. Everyone has succeeded. Students then continue with a "walk-around," covering the same kinds of space but now noticing and occasionally reacting with each other.

Various physical and movement exercises are added during the next two weeks, until enough skills and self-confidence are built for each class member to rehearse and present a short, simple one- or two-person pantomime to an audience composed of the rest of the class. This is the first graded activity and gives actors the chance to please the audience by creating "something" from "nothing." Now the audience is very much on their side and is surprised at how well they see the door, street or kitchen suggested by the actor.

During this time, the teacher gives abundant encouragement, praise, emotional support and relaxed, detailed explanation and examples of each exercise. Since this kind of student-involved drama course is so different from the "traditional" seated English class, students are asked to be extremely patient and suspend strong negative judgments about the method until they have had time to understand it better and see the point. We are also careful to make the exercises and games fun and keep the atmosphere light and humorous.

As the course continues, various verbal games and verbal/movement exercises are added, both of which develop concentration, imagination, conflict, emotional response and characterization. As they go along, students also learn the fundamentals of line interpretation, staging and directing until they are ready to do a staged reading of one act play as a final project, complete with blocking, set, costumes and lighting. Memorization of lines is optional.

While the first five weeks of the course stress four major areas of concentration (developing inner resources, movement, oral interpretation and characterization,) the sixth through eighth weeks concentrate on reading one act plays, selecting a play and a cast, and rehearsing the play. Groups are distributed to various areas surrounding the drama room, each taking turns using the drama room stage area and the comments of the roving teacher/director. During the ninth and tenth weeks, plays are performed before the class and additional invited audiences drawn from the pool of students on free time and from regular English Department classes meeting during the same period. Often we supplement our acting force by using students on unassigned time. In a sense, then, these final plays reach out to the entire school. Audience discussion follows each performance.

We have found the final projects (presentations of the one act plays) the most rewarding and magical time of the course. Each performance is approached with the same care and enthusiasm encountered at the school play, and drama students are placed in situations requiring them to synthesize the skills and understandings of the course. Enthusiasm is also generated through the visiting audiences, whose energies fuel the actors as they deliver their lines and portray their characters. We have made it a point regularly to invite administrators, librarians and staff from other departments to share in the joy of a performance and to watch their students perform in another medium.

How does all this affect the students? Each year hundreds elect the program and claim it as their favorite course. Students who at first spoke of being shy, nervous, petrified and unsure have left the course with a sense of accomplishment and growth and proof that they can get up in front of people and do things feeling poised, confident, comfortable and in control. Many students have reported an improvement in their grades during their drama quarter, claims which are frequently verified by parents.

We repeat that a program such as ours requires no special room. It requires only a regular classroom in which furniture can be moved to one side and an enthusiastic teacher. While we are fortunate in having a special drama room, we have, over the years, engaged in creative scrounging to build up a collection of costumes, hats, props and small furniture. When three small schools in the district were closed, we requested and received blackboards, small tables, rolling coat racks (great for windows and doors,) metal cabinets for costume storage, nurse's office screens for changes, and mirror and stair bannisters for movement exercises. When budgets fail, local appliance stores still offer flattened refrigerator cartons which can be used as sets.

Keep drama alive in some special place in your school and curriculum. It may be the most rewarding personal experience many of your students will encounter.

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"Heat Lightning"--Carroll
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"The Mice Have Been Drinking Again"--Haubold
"The Old Lady Shows Her Medals"--Barrie
"Parents are People"--M. Jerry Weiss
"Red Carnations"--Hughes
"The Singapore Spider"--Finnegan
"The Sisters McIntosh"--Corson
"The Still Alarm"--Kaufman
"Sunday Costs Five Pesos"--Niggli
"Suppressed Desires"--Glaspell
"Tardy April"--Wilson
"Ten Flights Up"--Carroll
"Three on a Bench"--Estrada
"Thursday Morning"--Morley
"Three's a Crowd"--McCarty
"While the Toast Burned"--Werts

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Unbirthday by A.M. Stephensen.
Avon Flare, 1982. 112 pp. $1.95.

Louisa Billingham, the main character and narrator, and Charlie Dutton fall in love during their senior year at Tollefson High School. Although it takes them months to even kiss, they eventually become close physically and ultimately, although hesitantly at first, experience and enjoy sex. But, as the cover to this adolescent novel proclaims, "What to do about sex was easy. What to do about pregnancy wasn't." Approximately the first half of the book revolves around Louisa's and Charlie's growing love for each other; the second half relates how they cope with Louisa's pregnancy and abortion. Although the author attempts to have us believe Louisa's decision to have an abortion is difficult and heart rending, Louisa's reactions to her doubts and guilt are too pat and predictable. In addition, while certainly dealing with a controversial, important, and timely topic, Unbirthday does not portray situations and characters in a realistic manner. With few exceptions, the adult characters--parents, teachers, doctors, etc.--are stereotypes. They are cold, superficial, and without compassion or understanding. Both the language and the narrow treatment of the touchy moral issue eliminate Unbirthday as a book most teachers would feel comfortable recommending to their students.

Reviewed by Richard H. Gray, Enfield High School, Enfield, CT.

Curriculum Drama: Does It Have A Place In English For The '80's?

Denny T. Wolfe, Jr.

The question posed in the title of this essay will undoubtedly seem absurd to many English teachers. "Of course curriculum drama has a place," they will answer. But others are less sure. Particularly at a time when preparing students for pencil-paper tests of language "competencies" is such an overwhelming concern of schools, engaging students in creative dramatics appears to be a luxury which some English teachers feel they simply cannot afford. Curriculum drama, or creative dramatics (I use the terms here synonomously), has to do with rhythm and movement, kinestics and space, miming and pantomiming, role-playing, and improvisation. How can involving students in such activities help achieve fundamental goals of the English curriculum?

Finding an answer to that question obviously requires, first, that one say what those"fundamental goals" are. I would argue that at least one fundamental goal of the English curriculum is to help students respond personally to literature and to non-print media. Making a personal response to what one reads or views is part of the process of understanding, for example, a poem or a film. If students have not learned to respond personally to both print and non-print media, of what real worth have their reading, listening, and viewing exercises been to them? Typically in schools, responding means thinking, talking, and writing. Certainly, developing these language processes is important to becoming an educated, "autonomous" person; but the context within which one makes such responses is also crucial.

Long ago John Dewey observed that we learn what we do. As an illustration, if students spend their time listening to a teacher lecture about the "meaning" of a poem, one thing they learn about education from such an experience is that one person who has knowledge places that knowledge inside the heads of those who do not have it. This perception of the educational process thus becomes the standard view which students hold toward schooling. Tests, in turn, often become instruments to measure one's ability to remember--the lowest level in Bloom's taxonomy of thinking.

Surely we wish students to derive a different perception of the educational enterprise. What we wish students to understand is that a major purpose of education--in English, particularly--is to help people become independent, inquiring, decision-making, problem-solving, curious thinkers who have learned how to learn

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and how to cope with novel situations. If we are to help students understand education in this way, we must provide opportunities for them to think, talk, and write--that is, respond--more personally and independently than many of them currently do. Curriculum drama offers teachers the potential to help students take greater responsibility for their own schooling, as well as understand education as a process of learning how to learn.

Curriculum drama also expands one's possibilities of responding beyond thinking, talking, and writing. It makes possible kinesthetic responses, as well. We learn with our bodies along with our heads, but secondary school English classes often fail to acknowledge this fact. One detailed example of how curriculum drama might be used to teach a poem will perhaps make concrete what I have been discussing abstractly. Let's say that I wish to teach R. Baird Shuman's poem "Citykid," which has been anthologized in secondary school literature textbooks:

Citykid

They took the boy out of the city
But no matter how they tried
They could not wrest the city magic
From the boy.

He looked at trees and rushing streams
And in them saw reminders of light posts
And teams of people flooding into subway stops
At half past five.

They told him he must walk in woods through autumn gold,
That he must learn to hunt and fish to be a man
But he had hunted, fished for coins through gratings
And walked in autumn moods at ten or twelve
When people prowl the streets to make seductions,
When eyes peer in the darkness avidly like Rousseau's
    tigers.*
And hands stroke body parts bound tight in clothes.

The boy was made to feel he was wrong
And they were right.
For, with them, there was no middle ground,
Just right and those who did not fit its mold:
The punishment, the soul starvation
Of a rehabilitation
Out of town.

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* Rousseau's tigers: French painter Henri Rousseau, most famous of the "primitive" painters recognized by modern art history.

("Citykid" appears here by permission of the author and of the National Council of Teachers of English.)

If we are interested in helping students respond personally to poetry, one way to accomplish that is to press them to think about imagery. Actually sensing images in a poem can lead to intense, personal responses far more readily than merely finding and naming the images can. Before distributing "Citykid," then, I ask students to stand beside their seats, and I direct them as follows:

"Close your eyes and try to relax. Stand in your most comfortable posture. Imagine yourself walking down a city street during afternoon rush hour. Look at the light posts. What do they look like? You see people around you crowding into subway stops. You look down at your feet and see iron gratings. What do you think is below them? You see a coin under one of the iron gratings. You try to get it out. Are you successful? It's getting dark now. You want to leave the street. When I clap my hands, open your eyes and sit down."

Now I ask students to say how they felt on the journey they just took. I do this in whole class discussion. After a few responses, I say, "Did you like being in the city?" As students answer, I ask them to say why they did or did not like where they were. When this discussion winds down, I direct the students as follows:

"Stand up again, close your eyes, and relax. Imagine you're in the country now. It's the fall of the year. What colors do you see? You have a fishing pole in your hands. You see a stream. You walk over to the stream and sit down on the bank. You bait your hook and toss your line into the stream. You wait for a fish to bite. You look around. What do you see? It's getting dark again and you prepare to leave the woods. When I clap my hands, open your eyes and sit down."

I ask students to say how they felt about being in the woods. Again, the discussion involves the whole class. After a few have spoken, I say, "Did you like being in the country? Why did you or didn't you?" Finally, I ask, "Which place did you like more--the city place or the country place? And why did you like one better than the other? When this discussion winds down, I distribute "Citykid."

Before reading the poem aloud to the class, I say, "As you listen to this poem, try to determine what attitudes are expressed toward the city. Is there anybody in the poem who prefers the city over the country? Is there anyone who prefers the country over the city?" When I finish my oral reading, I ask students to read the poem silently to themselves to answer the same questions.

Next, I divide the class in half. One group of students must write down why they think "they" in the poem decided to take "the boy" out of the city. The other groups must write down why they think "the boy" felt "punished" by being removed from the city.

(The students can work individually on their assignments; or, the two large groups can be sub-divided into small discussion groups, each with one student serving as recorder.)

As a culmination to this activity, I might ask for some volunteers to improvise a scene involving "they" in the poem (parents?) and the boy. To set the scene, I would suggest that the boy's parents need to tell him that they're going to move to the country because they feel the city is a bad environment for his "growing up years." The boy is not delighted with the news. After setting the stage in this way, I might ask, "Which two of you would like to find out how the parents might handle this situation? Which one of you would like to see how it feels to be the boy?" (It may be necessary at first to "encourage" some volunteers.) Several groups of three might perform this improvisation for the class. What's important here is that drama is being used as an instructional approach to promote personal responses to images and human relationships in a poem. Of course, further discussion will follow, relative to other features of the poem--e.g., a consideration of irony can often lead to fertile oral discussions, as well as to writing.

One of our fundamental goals as English teachers is to help students discover the holistic quality of our discipline--to help them understand that critical and creative thinking, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing are language processes which enable us to make our own meanings of the experiences we have both inside and outside of school. Using curriculum drama as an approach to teaching and learning enables us to employ all the language processes in concert, as the poetry "lesson" I have described illustrates.

Does curriculum drama have a place in the English classroom of the '80's? Clearly, it does, if we value the goal of improving students' abilities to make personal responses to the content of our curriculum.

Drama Without Fear

Chris Howard Bailey

The Dartmouth Conference, an Anglo-American Seminar on the teaching of English, held at Dartmouth College in 1966, examined among other topics the uses of drama in the classroom. Douglas Barnes summarized the drama discussions in his monograph Drama in the English Classroom and concluded that drama was essential to English teaching primarily because it encouraged the use of language to articulate experience: "Drama is not an educational frill, an applied ornament that can be dispensed with. It is not merely an extra activity for those students whose high intellectual abilities leave them time and energy for lightweight amusements. Nor is it merely an innocuous way of busying those incapable of more abstract intellectual activities. Drama is an essential part of a democratic education."[1]

The kind of drama advocated at the Conference was drama as process rather than formal theater or the study of dramatic texts.[2] The central focus of drama as process is the individual. The individual is expected to start the drama from wherever s/he is in her or his own experience. The individual acts out his/her responses (alone or in a group) to give idea, situation, or conflict. The method for acting out may involve improvisation, role-play, mime, movement, or a combination of all.

The value of such a teaching method is that it engages students, involving them in their own learning processes. Abstractions are made concrete. Instead of students' being told something which they passively internalize (or not), they are encouraged to participate in the topic presented. They talk about the topic before, during, and after the enactment and consequently use language to communicate their experiences. The drama, then, while an art form in itself which encourages creativity and imagination, is, also, a tool for learning, a means to approach other topics, a spring-board to explore and express various ideas and feelings.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, many teachers explored the use of such teaching techniques, and a vast body of literature documents some of the results.[3] The political and economic climate since then, however, has changed, and many teachers are now pressured to use only the most traditional of teaching methods. Emphasis is currently on the teaching of the three-R's.

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Facts and the acquisition of knowledge in a teacher-centered classroom are all important. Drama is once again seen as an expendable frill and dramatic activities as recreational pursuits. But the values of using drama as a tool for learning have not changed. Drama as process still encourages students to be engaged in their own learning. It demands that they think, feel, and, most importantly, use language to discuss their experiences. Surely this is not antithetical to the traditional aims of education?

Over the past years I have used drama as a teaching tool both in and out of the school setting, and I continue to be convinced of its value. With care and preparation, it is possible to use drama to teach various topics without disregarding the emphasis which is again being placed on traditional education. In this article, I indicate some of the ways I have used drama successfully with various levels and types of classes, and suggest how teachers working in a traditional atmosphere could use drama as a teaching tool.

In a local high school, where I taught English and Drama, I was able to use drama in a variety of ways. In my traditional English classes I often had students act out some aspect of the topic at hand. In a study of "A Rose for Emily," for example, we did some improvisations relating to the outsider, and in an examination of "Dulce et Decorum Est," we enacted arguments for and against war and patriotism. In each case, I would use the drama not as a substitute for the literature, but as a way to approach it. I would decide on what I thought was the essence of the particular piece of literature and then find some analogous situation which closely related to the students' lives. Students would then enact the analogous situation. Through the enactment, students would have to confront the central experience of the literature, and discussions of the enactment would lead naturally to the literature itself.

I also used drama as process in some of the school's interdisciplinary programs. Particularly, I helped develop a history and English program designed for students who traditionally had difficulty succeeding in American history courses. I devised a program which used drama as the means of directing students' interests, through the re-enactment of the lives of a fictitious family in their own town, to serious study of actual history. The students began by improvising aspects of the life of the family in contemporary times and moved back through the ages by imaginatively recreating the life of the previous generations of this same family. Historical research, reading, and writing were all generated from the weekly improvisations.

In another interdisciplinary program, the school's health program, I used drama to teach about such topics as alochol and drug abuse, adolescent suicide, and sexual assault. The procedure I followed for each topic was the same. For the adolescent suicide unit, for example, I first researched the topic myself and then introduced it to my students primarily by means of drama (improvisation, role-playing, acting-out, pantomime) although I also used lectures, films, literature, and slides. I brought in an expert on the topic, a local psychologist, who spoke to my students and answered any questions they had. When the students felt comfortable and knowledgeable about the topic, they brainstormed a scenario which concisely depicted all aspects of it. Later, the discussion generated by the enactment of the scenario was moderated by the expert.

Drama as process also works well in other educational settings. In an area community center, for example, I used drama to generate discussion among a group of elderly students concerned with the problems of the aged. I seated an elderly man and woman at a table and had them mime playing a game of cards. I then had a third person walk up to them and tell them that he had just bought the apartment building in which they lived and was going to convert it to condominiums. They, he said, had to move out by the end of the month. The rest of the group then tried to help the couple solve their problem. After discussing the situation, they enacted various solutions--moving in with their children or to a nursing home, fighting the eviction, and so on. Following the acting-out, the whole group discussed the problems raised.

In each of the examples I've presented of drama used as process, one can see that the drama, while an art in itself, is primarily a facilitator. Discussion is better generated by the drama. In no instance, however, is drama used as a substitute for what is considered academic. In each case, various academic skills are required--reading, writing, research, discussion, and so on. The students are helped through the drama to make connections, see analogies, examine experience, think, feel, and most importantly talk about their thoughts and feelings. Dorothy Heathcote, a great proponent of drama as process, underscores this in the following:

> Drama, then, teaches in the following way. Taking a moment in time, it uses the experiences of the participants, forcing them to confront their own actions and decisions and to go forward to a beleivable outcome in which they can gain satisfaction.This approach brings classes into those areas that in the main are avoided in school: emotion, control, understanding of the place and importance of emotion and language with which to express emotion. We expect good fathers, husbands, honest citizens, fine sensitive friends, tolerant and understanding neighbours but we have done very little to prepare them for these roles.[6]

HOW TO USE DRAMA AS PROCESS

Many teachers who might be convinced of the value of using drama as process, have either been reluctant to try it for fear of encouraging chaos at a time when great emphasis is being placed on classroom discipline, or because they tried once and did encourage chaos. Given the tenor of today's educational establishments where discipline and lesson plans are placed in high regard, how might a teacher use drama without fear?

It does not require an exhorbitant amount of time to get to the point where one can use drama as process. A few suggestions might be of help. Obviously, the teacher must be able to use drama, and the more training s/he has, the better prepared s/he will be. The interested teacher should try, therefore, to read some seminal texts and ideally to take some drama classes. At the very least, s/he should have some confidence in the value of using drama and in her or his ability to do so. Essentially, the teacher must have some idea of the theory underlying drama as process and must be prepared to incorporate such theory into practice knowing s/he will often have to justify such teaching methods to various authorities.

Discipline is a central concern in a traditional educational environment. It is also essential for successful drama work. The key to maintaining discipline during dramatic activities lies in the teacher's methods of class control, and in her or his ability to bring students to the point where they can concentrate fully on their work.

The teacher should determine methods of class control before beginning any drama work. S/he should also establish guidelines concerning the kind of behaviour and noise levels that will be tolerated. Often group size will help establish control. Working with the whole class all at once, for example, helps maintain the teacher's central authority. This method is especially useful for early work because it gives the teacher a chance to determine the mood and ability of the class while it helps the class itself feel safe working as one unit. Classes can then be divided into smaller groups working within the larger group--customers in a supermarket, or passengers on a bus, for example. This, in turn, can lead to independent small group work where each group is working on a different scene.

A danger with small group work is that groups tend to lose their concentration. The teacher must ensure that this is avoided. Sitting back and letting the groups work on their own is only valuable if the groups are actually working on their scenes. If they are not, then they are encouraging other groups besides themselves to lose concentration. A teacher can avoid this situation by moving from group to group either as a looker-on or as a helper who can assist with problems. The teacher might also move from group to group playing a particular role--a role that would aid the students in developing their scenes. In this way, the teacher can exercise various authority roles. If the class is enacting, for example, a drama about a young man who overdoses at a dance, the teacher might want to play the principal or the band leader at the dance. In this role, the teacher would be the central authority. As the drama focuses on each small group at the dance, the teacher, as principal or band leader, could move from group to group and still remain the central authority. However, when the drama focuses on the small groups, the teacher may decide to play one of the adolescents at the dance. A student might then play the principal or band leader. Obviously, the teacher has to decide what s/he feels most comfortable playing.

The teacher's sense of comfort also affects the amount of noise and the kind of distractions s/he will allow. In a school setting, one has to be conscious of and sensitive to other teachers and students who are trying to concentrate on their studies and who are going to be justifiably angry if twenty voices (or more) are yelling. The teacher has to take into consideration what students can reasonably do without causing a riot or repeatedly disturbing other classes. If a scene calls for loud noise, the teacher might, for example, ask students to mime the scene.

Planning the drama class is, therefore, incredibly important. Plans will take into account the level, ability, and purpose of the class, but will not be so rigid that they stifle spontaneity which is vital for the development of meaningful drama. The teacher may determine, for example, that s/he wants to examine the conflicts of peer pressures and decision making. S/he may then plan a large group improvisational scene and some small group problem-solving situations which present various aspects of the problem, but that will be the extent of the planning. How the drama develops will depend on the students' creative energies.

Students, however, cannot usually get up and instinctively develop their creative energies. Adolescents are especially reluctant to do so. I have found, therefore, that a little time spent preparing students to use drama is enormously beneficial. The older the student, the more sophisticated the approach must be, but I have used the same general approach with different levels of students and it has always worked. I first start with some introductory exercises designed to ease tensions and establish a working rapport. Each student introduces himself and names his favourite hobby, for example. Then I do some exercises aimed at developing concentration, which is essential for the students to have if they are to overcome any anxiety they might feel. The exercises ensure that serious, sincere work is maintained. Developing concentration is not easy, and the teacher at any time in the drama work may have to return to some concentration exercises in order to re-establish some seriousness of purpose. A typical concentration exercise is where one student will start to tell a story, the second repeats what the first said and then adds his own sentence, the third repeats what the first and second students said and then adds a sentence, and so on around the class.

The teacher at this stage of the drama work must establish control of the class and explain the purpose of the activities. The class must understand that it is not simply playing games. Rather, students are being led through a series of activities to bring them to a point where they can improvise. Students are very receptive to this approach. They like to know why they are doing what they are asked to do. If they see a reasonable purpose and are receptive to that purpose, they will concentrate and cooperate.

I then move on to exercises that are designed to develop awareness of self and others. Generally, these tend to be exercises developing the senses. Students, for example, are asked to name objects that are missing from a larger group of observed objects. Or, in groups of three, one student would try to listen to another reading while the third talks to her or him. From here, I move to some basic movement exercises. Movement is especially fundamental to pantomime and improvisation, but it is difficult to approach with older students who are often self-conscious. The teacher, therefore, must be free of self-consciousness, and must approach the exercises from a sophisticated point of view.

Movement leads naturally into pantomime, and from pantomime one can easily move into improvisation. The teacher can simply have the students re-enact their pantomimed scenes adding dialogue. By the time the students have reached this point they are often eager to add dialogue. From spontaneous improvisations one can move to planned or unplanned role-plays. Whether they are planned or not will obviously depend on the situation and the purpose of the class. Large group activities often work best if they are not pre-planned beyond the initial situation and conflict, but small group activities work well either way. Students often feel more comfortable, however, if they can have some time to work out what they want to happen, and some of the dialogue they want to develop. In this sense, they prefer "acting-out" to strict improvisation. They seem to like structure to their work. Within this structure they can be spontaneous.

A teacher might take one day or five days, depending on the time available, to bring students to the point where they can improvise or role-play. Certainly, the time is well spent. After preparation students are much more able to respond seriously to the drama work. Only if they can respond seriously will the real benefits of using drama as a teaching tool be realized.

Notes

[1] Douglas Barnes, Drama in the English Classroom (Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968), preface.

[2] See Peter Slade, Child Drama (London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1954).

[3] See especially, Brian Way, Development Through Drama (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1967); John Allen, Drama in Schools: Its Theory and Practice (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979); and Lynn McGregor, Developments in Drama Teaching (London: Open Books, 1876).

[4] Dorothy Heathcote, "Drama as Education," in Children and Drama, ed. Nellie McCaslin (David McKay Co., 1975), p. 104.

Resource

All About Theatre by Helen Sheehy of Hamden Hall. Independent School Press, Inc., 1981. 272 pp.

All About Theatre, as the title promises, is a comprehensive text, which includes performance skills, production skills, theatre criticism and theatre history. The text provides a thorough introduction to theatre and does not presume prior theatre experience on the part of the student or teacher. Each performance and production chapter takes an organized, "how-to" approach to theatre. Numbered guidelines provide the student with a basis for systematically achieving a goal, such as character development, as well as for evaluating other's work. The chapters on production skills are particularly indepth, and, perhaps, might be assigned individually on the basis of a student's interest in make-up, set design or lighting. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions, vocabulary and engaging suggestions for further activities. The text is supported by numerous photographs and graphics; in addition, an appendix gives the names and addresses of play publishers and a source of information on college and summer theatre programs.

The author's concern for the student's general well-being and overall education is also notable. For example, several cautions are given regarding the safe construction of sets and removal of make-up. The text also provides a rationale for most activities, thereby providing the teacher with an explanation for the ever-present question: "Why do I have to do this?" The student, throughout the text, is also given information that will aid his/her general studies. For example, discussions of characterization and symbolism improve literary analysis, playful alliterative exercises improve speech, critique guidelines encourage careful writing skills, and general study abilities are strengthened by relaxation and concentration exercises.

Despite its potential usefulness, this text does have a limited audience. The text is evidently meant as an introduction to theatre for high school students, since several references are made to them, but only students with above-average ability are likely to be able to use the text fully. Lower track students will probably have difficulty with the vocabulary, depth of detail, and use of excerpts from the classics.

Reviewed by Nancy Rabianski, the University of New Haven, Associate Editor of CEJ.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Rise and Fall of a Teen-age Wacko by Mary Anderson.
Bantam, 1982. 169 pp. $1.95.

Laura loves the city, glamour, fantasy, clothes, and the movies. When her family takes her to the country for the summer, she is terribly unhappy and asks to return home on her own. Once home, she buys an antique dream dress, accidentally gets involved with Woody Allen, and becomes entangled with the police while trying to break into show business. Through this unlikely chain of events, Laura's summer goes from boredom to excitement to pure disillusionment. The Rise and Fall of a Teenage Wacko is not a particularly memorable book. It humorously details what happens to a "star struck teenager" over the course of the summer, but it makes no real statement other than "dreamers will be dreamers." The title of the book may also be misleading since "wacko" may mean something other than dreamer to some readers. This tale of fantasy versus reality should be of greatest interest to middle school girls who are looking for "light" reading, especially girls with overpowering younger sisters or girls who are inclined to daydream extensively. Others may find the book somewhat too fanciful or lacking in significant content.

Reviewed by Darla Shaw, East Ridge Junior High School,
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PAPERBACK REVIEW

Friends Till the End by Todd Strasser.
Dell, 1982. 200 pp. $2.95.

Performing the prescribed "rites of passage"--a senior's sudden interest in studies, scoring the winning point in the school soccer game, sexual intimacy with his girl friend, Rena--leave seventeen-year-old David Gilbert dissatisfied, restless, questioning. Should he please his father and do what his friends expect by accepting the soccer scoholarship to the university or should he tell his father of his awakening desire to become a doctor? When Howie Jameson, the new boy in the school who doesn't belong to David's in-crowd, is hospitalized with leukemia, David's desire becomes a firm resolution. Dealing with the decision as well as with Howie's disease and possible death cause David to withdraw from his friends. Since the story is recounted from David's point of view, this is its weakness. Because David does not experience the emotional reactions that are found in Admission to the Feast and Eric, other stories dealing with leukemia, neither does the reader. While Strasser has clearly defined David's maturation process and has vividly described how leukemia ravages its victim, he only begins to truthfully touch David's and Howie's encounter with the stages of grief. Friends Till the End does give a graphic account of an adolescent's acceptance of life, but it only begins to answer the question, "What if my friend dies?"

Reviewed by Ann Keating, Bristol Central High School, Bristol, CT.

Drama In The Middle School Classroom

Margaret Queenan

Yes, drama is being taught in Connecticut. My gifted eighth graders studied drama, wrote a play of their own, and participated in the school musical, Music Man. I can't take credit for the latter, but I had a whale of a time helping them with the former.

In February, my students at Cloonan Middle School in Stamford, Ct. began studying Julius Caesar. They loved it. Not only did they memorize Antony's speech to the mob, but they performed in front of every teacher they could stop in the hallway. They were magnificent. They were also only eighth graders, so they had plenty of "hands-on" participation. The first activity was to make "Paper Bag Players" (an idea I stole from Mary and Paul Cervoni at Trumbull High School when I was practice teaching there.) This consists of constructing paper bag masks of the characters and using them as your imagination guides you. I curled strips of white paper, touched them with dabs of pink, and brought in a curly-headed Cinna the Poet to demonstrate what I had in mind. The next day we had an outrageous Calpurnia, a Caesar whose eyes moved where we did, and 28 students who could follow the movement of the characters in the play because their masks were bent-paper-clipped to the edge of the chalk board and given center stage at the proper scene. Of course, the students performed the play. Each group of four was given a section to prepare overnight. They did an excellent job of speaking the lines the next day. My interruptions for giving background and explanations became a class joke. Each week the students were responsible for answering three essay questions on the act we were studying. Since I was busy reading their short stories from the last unit, I asked them to read each other's rough drafts and make suggestions for improvement. I read only the final copies. Both essayist and prompter did an outstanding job and received equal grades.

The next step in our drama experience began in April and involved all my students, not just the gifted ones. We wrote plays of our own. The Young Playwrights Festival in New York accepts plays from students and comments on each one. They return any that do not have the true format of a play, and in January will send a critique to each student. Some lucky students might even have their plays performed! All, in the meantime, have had an experience that is not usual in an English classroom. We began by inviting the drama critic of a nearby newspaper to talk with the students. He was an encyclopedia of information on playwriting and playwrights, himself included. By the time he finished, the

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students were champing to begin.

The first step built on journal activities. Over spring vacation the students had described a friend according to the traditional means of characterization: the friend's actions; what others think of the friend; the conversations, telling sayings of the friend; and, finally, thoughts that the friend had shared with them. The friend, with a name change, was to become a character in the play. This was a starting point only. The student was to allow the character to grow and change with the writing. (This, by the way, was an activity the students enjoyed. They said that they had never thought so deeply about a person before.)

Another journal activity led to creating the setting for the play. The students were to describe the room that had made the strongest positive or negative impression on them. They were to close their eyes and see and record every dustball in the room so that others could see it, too. Then they were to draw a picture of the room as if one wall were cut out and people could see in. This picture then became the basis on which the students gave stage directions for their plays. At the suggestion of the Young Playwright's Festival, we limited the settings to one or, for a very good reason, two.

Very quickly, before beginning the play, the students jotted down a plot outline. They were to keep it simple since plots tend to complicate themselves as they go along. The students had already studied the elements of plot, so they were able to make a list of exposition elements: what the audience needed to know before the play could be understood. Now all the students had to decide was how to handle the exposition. Would the characters discuss it? Would a narrator explain from a side-of-the-stage perch in the manner of Williams' Glass Managerie? As the students wrote, I had story conferences with them to help them plan.

Next the students decided on the conflict. Who would be clashing with what idea? Would the problem be in the person's mind? between two friends? against nature? against society? I asked the students to know the turning point in advance. As Poe never made a poem's mid-lines more dramatic than the ending (or so he said), the students must not make any of the plot complications more dramatic than the turning point, the moment of high drama when at last it would be clear how it would all turn out. They were also asked to consider in advance how they would wrap up the loose ends in the denouement and how they would end the play. They were to tell their group mates the simple outline of the play and give the ending. The group mates then had to decide if the ending fit with what had gone before or if they were left saying, "Whaaat???"

The plays were an enormous success. Not one student had written a play before. All agreed that it was the most difficult thing that they had ever been asked to write, and all agreed that holding a play of their own in their hand was one of the most satisfying experiences that they had had in school. To publish their plays, the students had a reading among their group mates and then exchanged plays with two friends. This served the double purpose of a final editing check since we were sending the plays to the Young Playwright's contest. The only experience that all of us agreed that we should have had was the performing of one of the plays. Next time we'll have a lottery to decide which play will be put on for other classes.

This was not the end of our experience with drama. The American Shakespeare Theatre produced Twelfth Night this spring, so we borrowed a class set of the play from our high school and spent a few weeks studying the words so that we could enjoy the live performance. This time we put the cast of characters on the chalkboard in the brightest colors we could find. Malvolio had yellow stockings, of course, and Olivia's quickly changing personality was clothed in half black for mourning and half pink to accommodate her new interest in Viola/Cesario. The students loved the idea of a pompous Malvolio's getting his comeuppance from the boozing Sir Toby Belch. We listened to one act of a high quality record where the giggles of the conspirators started matching giggles in our classroom. Then we read the remainder of the play, stopping at the highlights for discussion of why we want to seem to be what we're not or of what importance constancy is in friendship. My goal for this group of students was met in their final exams when they were able to relate the action of the play to these themes of seeming and constancy.

To accommodate a class of slower learners who also wanted to see the live performance of Twelfth Night, I told much of the story, stopping at pre-selected parts so the students could follow as I read and explained. Listening to highlights on the record as they followed along in the book also helped. So did leaving the preposterous caricatures of the characters on the chalkboard for the few weeks that we spent on the play. The students also benefited from a chart of the plot outline and a diagram of the love triangles involved in the play. My goal with these students was a simple recognition of the characters of the play and the ability to retell the story.

However, the students surprised me. This was the first time that I have ever asked a class to write a drama of their own, but now I'll do so every year. Even the slower students were discussing Twelfth Night from the point of view of writers. I was astounded and delighted when they decided that they didn't like the way that Shakespeare handled the denouement, that he should have ended the play as soon as Viola discovered that her brother was alive, Olivia switched her allegiance to Sebastian, and Orsino turned from Olivia to Viola. Drama in our eighth grade classroom was quite a success.

It was such a success that we continued with "minidramas" in the form of roleplaying. We roleplayed many things, even parts of speech. (Nouns went around the room naming...why should a desk still be called "desk" after a round Greek discus? Verbs performed...Middle school students enjoy the school's-let-out-feeling of acting out the verbs "to hop," "to jump," "to jog in place.")

MONEY, MONEY MONEY

Do you know about the Spring 1982 issue of CEJ? MONEY, MONEY, MONEY is 157 pages of tips from English teachers and former English teachers, telling how to use English teaching skills to earn extra money or to find other jobs. NCTE has selected the issue for national distribution.

You may order a copy for yourself or a friend by sending $6.75 to Paul Cervoni, 20 State Street, North Haven, CT 06473. Make cheques payable to CCTE.

We also roleplayed emotions and actions when we were studying body language and discovered why it's so much easier to tell someone to "Put the book down over there," than it is to tell them, "You hurt my feelings."

An ersatz drama topped off the researching and writing with the videotaping of a documentary in a true, nonmanipulative format. The students presented both sides of an issue of their choice in words that deliberately did not play on the emotions of their audience. They chose topics from the $3.4 million dollar budget cut in Stamford's education budget to the causes and effects of anorexia nervosa. They were required to read a shelf book, reference book, and periodical to give them background and to interview an "expert" in the field they were studying to give them current points of view. I told the students not to be afraid to interview anyone, that most grownups liked to help students. Nevertheless I was surprised (and pleased) that one student telephoned our new Superintendent of Schools to ask him exactly how the budget cut would affect our middle school and how the students could believe that their education was not going to suffer from such a severe change.

In a related experience, our classes learned the lines of argument and the traditional format of a formal debate. They then researched, prepared, and argued in a formal debate on an issue that would affect their future. The students chose topics that included: "Resolved: Computers Should Replace Teachers in the Classroom" and "Resolved: A Space Colony Should be Built on the Moon." This, too, was a first-time experience for the students (and the teacher!) and was voted the favorite unit of the year.

Drama, in all its forms, can be an integral part of the English classroom. Just listen to the voices of the students: "Can't we do a play today, please?"

PAPERBACK REVIEW

In Our House Scott I, My Brother by C.S. Adler.
Bantam, 1982. 163 pp. $1.95.

After a three-month transcontinental courtship, Jodi's dad marries Scott's mom. A blond California beauty queen and her thirteen-year-old son journey to Onondaga, NY, to marry a man with a face "like a bulldog" and live happily for how long? So many elements combine to make this plot implausible that an adult reader will be distracted by its lack of cohesiveness. The one-dimensional characters and lack of motivation for plot development further diminish its value. Karen Dewhart, a friend of Jodi's deceased mother and purportedly of Jodi, could have served as a mentor, but she spouts a few platitudes and moves away. Doreen, a "special education student" and Mr. Briggs, an ornery old man who warns of the wicked stepmother, are also stereotyped. "Donna drank and Scott stole." Seemingly little in this novel has or is of consequence. Only at the end of this novel does Scott begin to flesh out, through Jodi's narration and his actions in trying to dissuade his mother from drinking, providing her with "TLC" and generally "shoring her up." However unusual this role reversal seems, it is the only relationship in the novel which rings true. But, as soon as it begins to develop, Donna and Scott fly off, and neither Jodi and her father nor the reader is diminished.

Reviewed by Linda Fademan, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School,
Enfield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Grandpa--And Me by Stephanie S. Tolan.
Dell Yearling, 1982. 120 pp. $1.95.

At first I thought that the kitchen havoc wrought by Grandpa at mid-story should have been part of this novel's opening pages, but then I saw that Tolan's book is not for most readers. It's a short novel for those youngsters (grades 6-8) who like to read about family problems. Middle-school children are adjusting daily to their new perceptions of themselves. Among their many concerns is that of getting along with parents. This novel deals with the problem of Grandpa's growing senility. Kerry is a young girl who must deal with her grandfather's "craziness" and with her parents' decision to put him into a home. The resolution (the grandmother's suicide) comes after we see that he wasn't crazy, but *ill* with senile dementia. His death, in fact, is an example of his own strength. The plot moves well because of the small sub-plots, especially that of Kerry's finding out about Sophie, Grandpa's beloved dead sister. Sentence structure is varied and never taxing. Vocabulary is easy enough for most sixth-graders. The few characters are easy to keep track of. And, in Kerry's seeing her grandfather's positive influence on her own life, the story does end on a valid upbeat.

Reviewed by John Barnes, Turn of River Middle School, Stamford, CT.

Drama In Support Of The English Curriculum

Keith Cunningham

"Learning by doing" is one of those overworked phrases that has been tossed around so often that it has become either reduced to a rationale for the lazy and unqualified or sanctified by those who feel that all education should be exclusively experiential. Yet the validity of this approach to learning as an enrichment to traditional educational methods is widely recognized and for the past 16 years has formed the core of the approach used by the Center for Theatre Techniques in Education (CTTE) in Stratford, Connecticut, in applying specially developed techniques to a variety of educational settings. On the basis of work done by CTTE and others there is solid evidence that theatre, which encompasses all the arts, can effectively serve disciplines ranging from foreign language learning to the technical trades, from basic skills to the more advanced language arts, and to the English curriculum in particular.

Today, the English teacher is faced with any number of obstacles to teaching and learning in the classroom--overcrowding, shortened class periods, rigid syllabus requirements, uninterested, even hostile students. At the least the teacher is somehow expected to perform minor miracles in this situation, turning out literate, eager, and yet disciplined young men and women. At the same time, harmony is to be maintained at all costs, not only with students but with fellow teachers and administrative staff. With few useful tools at their disposal teachers are often forced to subordinate whatever teaching ideals they may have come with to the exercise of classroom discipline and control. Theatre techniques provide at least one way of addressing these problems.

The premise behind the Center's approach (in relation to the English curriculum) is that theatre requires direct and active involvement in problem-solving situations, that involvement in a theatre-related task teaches, and that a carefully designed sequence of theatre exercises and improvisations can enable students to gain insight into English literature. A by-product of this process is the discovery that individual and group learning can be an exciting and enriching experience. (In this connection I am talking less about techniques that help an English teacher direct the spring musical or about drama as a separate discipline, than about how theatre can bring literary works--poetry, prose, and plays--to life in the classroom.)

Before listing activities which can be used in the English classroom, let us look first at the rationale behind CTTE's theatre techniques approach. Theatre is uniquely suited as a

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medium to deal with teaching and learning concerns because theatre encompasses all art forms and can be directed toward a wide variety of disciplines. Painting, sculpture, music, dance, photography and numerous technical crafts can be elements in a theatre work and can be directed towards historical, scientific, and literary subjects. Theatre can also be an effective socializing force as it demands cooperative interaction within a working group in order to reach a common goal, such as the presentation of a theatre piece. The clear parallels between the director-actor and teacher-student relationship make the incorporation of theatre activities into the classroom an even more desirable goal. Theatre activities such as improvisations can help to restore an excitement to learning as students and teachers discover fresh and creative ways to work together on a common task--in this case, making English language and literature come alive.

Four elements essential to effective learning in any area form the main objectives of CTTE's work in theatre:

1. Community--Activities in this area help to establish a productive learning community in which students can contribute comfortably and without tension to the task at hand. This means that each student can sense the importance of his or her own contribution, at the same time looking at that contribution in terms of the total effect. They can thus accept the discipline of the process without giving up self-esteem and without closing off imaginative responses.

2. Concentration--This objective deals with developing a person's process of concentration so that he or she is able to direct or shift focus easily from one task to another as appropriate without hesitation or distraction.

3. Imagination--Here the focus is on freeing up and extending a person's imaginative capacity, to let each person understand that his or her imagination is unique and belongs to the individual and that it has immense creative energy.

4. Environment--People and objects, their relationship to each other and to the spaces around them form the basis of this objective. Awareness and usage of space beginning with the individual as a sensory being in an immediate environment and extending to the larger community and the world as a whole--this too is integral to CTTE's work with theatre techniques.

The activities which follow deal with one or more of these objectives and are a mere sampling of the many ways to enrich the English classroom. It is important to remember that no two classrooms, students, or teachers are alike, so that these activities must be selected, used, and adapted accordingly. The number and age of students involved, length of time available in the classroom, the teacher's style and personality, and room size are only a few of the factors which will influence the selection of activities. Careful selection, sequencing, and above all, the teacher's willingness to adjust, adapt, and maintain a sense of humor are the key ingredients to success with these activities.

While the exercises can serve a variety of purposes, they have been arranged here to deal with a common headache--teacher and student frustration at attempts to make literary works come alive. None of these activities should be used in isolation but should be part of a larger, carefully worked-out plan to deal with the teacher's specific objectives. At the outset it is useful to look at how the teacher's material has been approached in the past. (If it worked, by all means use it!) How do you read the play, the novel, the poem? Do you read it to your students? Do they read it to you? Do you listen to a recording of it by the author or other acknowledged literary figure or performer? Do you have the students memorize the different parts of the work and recite it or act it out in front of the class? Do they paraphrase it, discuss it, or otherwise rework it in some way? What are you trying to accomplish...an understanding of theme? character motivation? musicality of the language? structure of the work? These are among many of the valid approaches that have been used effectively in teaching the English curriculum. The activities below are offered as a way of expanding on these approaches, not replacing them, in an effort to make literary works more accessible, understandable and enjoyable by bringing them to life. This does not mean "acting out" every play, poem, or novel that is taught in the classroom, though some form of dramatization may be a logical extension of this process at a later date.

I. DEVELOPING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

The first series of exercises deals with developing a learning community and facilitates a more effective use of successive exercises. While their relationship to the study of literature may not be apparent at first, they play an important part in preparing students for active and cooperative participation in the activities which follow:

Ordering and alphabetizing -- After pushing back the desks and taking the group through a short series of physical warmups (gentle stretches and loosening exercises) have the students, at the teacher's signal, arrange themselves in order (alphabetically by first name, by height, by mailing address number, new first name, month of birth, etc.). Emphasis is placed on moving as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible. This activity requires movement, talking, and cooperation to achieve the group task. With each new arrangement time limits can be shortened to pick up the pace.

Survival -- Have students pair up and find a place where each pair can sit comfortably, partners facing each other. Have them spend about one minute observing each other silently. Have each person turn around and change 3 things about their appearance.

These changes must be clearly visible. When all are ready partners face each other and each tries to guess the other's changes. Repeat this process by increasing the changes to ten or twelve additional. Try changing partners as well. This is a good exercise in observation, imagination and making do with available resources.

Passing Through the Center -- Have the group form a standing circle, all facing center. Each person picks a point directly opposite him or her on the circle and at the signal moves through the center of the circle to that point silently, without touching anyone. Repeat, having group move faster each time. Repeat with group numbered off (1,2,1,2,etc) with 1's blind (blindfolded or with eyes closed), 2's able to see. Reverse roles, then try with everyone blind. Start slowly, allow individuals to touch if necessary, build up speed when appropriate. Good exercise for group focus and cooperation.

Cumulative Introductions -- Seat group in a circle. One person begins by introducing him or herself by first name and one of the following - what he or she wanted to be when 8 years old, favorite food, favorite place, special talent, etc. Each person repeats this, introducing oneself as well as everyone else preceding who has already been introduced. All introductions should include name plus the attribute chosen above. It is possible to do this exercise successfully with large groups though it does take time. A physical gesture appropriate to the stated attribute helps this process.

These, then, are just a sampling of community building and warm-up exercises that can prepare the way for more curriculum oriented activities such as the ones which follow.

II. ORIENTING ACTIVITIES WITH CURRICULUM

Cut up poem/jumble play -- These two exercises vary only in that one deals with poetry and the other with plays. The process in both is to select an unfamiliar poem or short scene from a play and to cut it up into either phrases, poetic lines, or lines of dialogue with the characters' names removed. The object is for small groups of 5-8 to take these scrambled lines and to agree on a way to combine them into something which makes sense. The object is not to recreate the original but to come to some agreement as to how the lines might go together.

From here there are many possibilities: the poem might be titled, read aloud, compared with the original, dramatized, performed as a movement piece; with the play, each person could be assigned a line or lines to which they might have to give meaning by using the line(s) at least once in the course of a scene, the number of characters speaking these lines might be varied, or the scene might be presented as a radio play. The possibilities are limited only by the teacher's and the students' imaginations. Whatever is decided, this exercise is a useful first step in looking at language and word usage in literary terms by becoming part of the work or form being analyzed. With some minor variations this process could be applied to narrative literature as well.

Circle Story -- This is a variation on the previous activity except that, in this case, the story (or poem or play) develops from within the group. Have the entire class sit in a circle. One person begins by telling three words (or other fixed length) of a story. Each person in turn adds three words to what has preceded until everyone in the circle has contributed at least once. The class then divides into smaller groups of 5-8 and after agreeing on the sequence of events within the story decides on a way to retell it or present it. Individuals may take different roles; the story might be done as abstract movement piece; a small section of the story might be recreated or even rewritten. This is the raw material for any number of activities which might follow.

A variation on this is circle play which begins with groups of 5-8, each seated in a circle and with a piece of paper and a pencil in front of each person. At the signal, each person writes one line of dialogue at the top of the page, preceded by a character's name. After 30 seconds, each person passes his or her paper to the person on their right who must then add a line of dialogue to the first line. This continues until each paper has been around the circle twice. The person who began each paper should wind up with his or her own. Certain limitations can help keep this activity from getting too unwieldy: time limits between passes, setting a maximum of 3 different characters in each play, etc. Once this is complete, the group reads each play and decides on one to present to the rest of the class. Again, this can take whatever form the teacher feels appropriate from a straight reading to a fully staged playlet.

Interruptions - Number off group 1,2,3 ... Numbers 1 and 2 come in front of the group and begin a conversation on any topic. Once the conversation is established (no longer than one minute), number 3 enters the conversation giving number 1 a reason to leave, which number 1 must accept. The conversation continues between number 2 and 3. Number 4 interrupts number 2, number 5 interrupts number 3 and so on until everyone has taken part in the conversation. Those interrupting should attempt to interrupt with a reason that relates to the conversation that is already established. The conversation should then pick up from the reason given for the previous person to leave. If students know only their own number, this becomes a completely absorbing activity where the focus is on keeping track of who is speaking as well as what is being talked about. This exercise is a good introduction to dialogue, speaking on one's feet, and making meaningful, spontaneous conversations with a given situation. As with previous exercises, this may be only the first step towards refining a story, understanding character development, creative story writing, etc.

Telegram -- Students work in pairs. Each pair has one sheet of paper. Partners (characters) are close friends or relatives who are geographically separated by some distance. A sends a telegram to B requesting something (money, special object) that B has the ability to give but will not give unless A's argument is so persuasive that B can't refuse. A must persist in trying to get what he or she wants. B must resist as much as possible. Communication is telegram style. A sends a one-line telegram request to B, B responds (on the same paper) with another line, A tries again, and so on until either A gets what was requested or either person uses up a total of 50 words each over the entire telegram. Telegram exchanges are then shared with the class, discussed in terms of communication strategies, word usage and economy, possible ways to expand into a scene, etc.

Airport -- Form an airport runway with two lines of chairs outlining a 6 foot by 30 foot space. A, the control tower operator, stands at one end; B, the pilot, stands at the other, blindfolded. (A is a pilot whose transmitter is dead and who is trying to land safely in a blinding snowstorm.) Objects are scattered on the runway, (wreckage from earlier landing attempts). A verbally guides B down the runway so that the pilot avoids the obstacles and contact with sides of runway. If pilot touches any of these, he or she crashes or stays in place as part of the runway debris. A new pilot and controller now take over. Variations include time limits to get the pilot safely down the runway ("running low on fuel"), two pilots and controllers working simultaneously, several controllers guiding the entire group, etc. This is an excellent way to develop sensory awareness, shared responsibility and improved communication and metaphorically illustrates three basic elements of theatre--objective, obstacle and action.

Letter of Apology -- Each student writes a letter of apology to anyone for anything, real or imaginary. After reading these letters aloud have one student (A) bring his/her letter to the front of the class. Place two chairs, back to back, have A sit in one and another student (B) sit in the other. B is to receive the apology although A has now decided not to send the letter but to apologize by phone. A's task is to apologize and to obtain forgiveness from B who must be certain that A has earned his forgiveness. The scene is improvised based on the material in the original letter. Then reset the scene. A has decided not to write or phone but to apologize in person. Assume now that there has been no phone call. The scene is now improvised face to face with the same goals. Repeat with other students and letters. This activity produces a wealth of material for discussion especially when you focus on what happened between the letter and the face to face meeting. It provides a first hand look at the inner, emotional life of a script, non-verbal behavior, and character motivation and development in general.

"Where"/join on to a world -- One person (or a small group of 2-4) decides on a specific location to begin a scene (park, train station, library, doctor's office, etc.) Each person decides who he or she will be in this place and will perform an activity appropriate to the setting which will clearly define the space and what is in it (position and size of doors, windows, chairs, tables, etc.) Allow two minutes only to prepare and ask audience to become part of the scene one at a time when they feel that they know where the space is. The object is to define the space as clearly as possible through physical action. This should be done non-verbally. Try to avoid the tendency to turn this into a guessing game by focusing on actors establishing as much detail about the space as possible.

Story as someone else -- In groups of 5-8, have each person tell a two minute story about something significant that happened to them or that changed them in some way. Each group then chooses one of these stories to present to the rest of the class. This can be done either verbally where each person shares in the retelling of the story as if it were his or her own--or it can be acted out by the group, the person whose story is chosen becoming the director and portraying someone other than him or herself. In either case, each person in the group should take part in the presentation. This is another of those exercises in which students' own experiences provide a wealth of material that can be used in relation to the English curriculum. Here the resources of the class can be used to look at transitions from the initial story to the "revised" version in which others must find a way to get inside the "inner life" of the story and recreate it in a way which is true to the original but which now has added dimensions and can be communicated in a variety of ways to a larger audience. These are all important elements of the literary (and creative) experience.

These then are just a few examples of ways to involve students actively in the English curriculum by looking at some of the creative elements that go into producing a literary work. This list is far from complete and is not necessarily arranged in the most effective order for every classroom. The success of these depends ultimately on the teacher's willingness to trust himself or herself, his or her students, as well as the exercises themselves. It will also depend on the teacher's responsiveness to the class in order to come up with new exercises, adapt others, and design a sequence that meets the particular needs of the students. More information on this subject can be obtained by writing The Center for Theatre Techniques in Education, 1850 Elm Street, Stratford, Connecticut 06497, which offers workshops, consultation and a number of related publications.

For those specifically interested in ways to present scripts from the most basic reading to a fully staged production, the Reader's Theatre Script Service (San Diego, California) has many useful suggestions along with plays, poetry, and short stories that have been adapted to the Reader's Theatre format.

Finally, I have listed a few publications that we have found provide many practical suggestions in the area of drama and education. These are some of the many resources available, the basic raw materials. It is now up to you, the teacher, to draw from this, to adapt and adopt according to your own situation and to make this material your own.

RESOURCES

Elkind, Samuel, Improvisation Handbook: Glenview, Illinois; Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975.

Loch, Kenneth, Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?; New York; Vintage Books, 1973.

Koch, Kenneth, Wishes, Lies and Dreams; New York; Chelsea House, 1970.

Spolin, Viola, Improvisation for the Theatre; Evanston, Illinois; Northwestern University Press, 1963.

Way, Brian, Development Through Drama; London, Longmans, 1967.

Wolf and Miller, Theatre's Different Demands
and
New Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare

(These publications are available through The Center for Theatre Techniques in Education, Stratford, Connecticut)

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Mrs. Fish, Ape, and Me, the Dump Queen by Norma Fox Mazer.
Avon Flare, 1982. 138 pp. $1.95.

Three outcasts become a family in this story, as promised on the paperback cover. The "dump queen," Joyce, lives near the garbage dump; her uncle, the "ape," works in it; and Mrs. Fish is an ugly janitress at the school. In the current juvenile literature, important characters are deliberately atypical: handicapped people, alienated children, senile grandparents. Authors seem to be responding to a developing public sensitivity towards society's outcasts. The less-skilled writers are too didactic, but the better writers, among them Norma Fox Mazer, makes these pariahs people first. In fact, the very qualities which might cast these people out of our consciousness are the very things which make them unique--and all the more interesting! In this story all three major characters must deal with a hostility generated by something not of their own doing. The question soon becomes: Can they learn to accept and (then) to live with each other? The story moves smoothly on ball-bearings of credible, funny, and serious dialogue. An interesting sub-plot, by the way, begs for a continuation at the end of the story when Joyce realizes that she has the power to re-make a broken friendship. For upper elementary to middle-school readers.

Reviewed by John Barnes, Turn of River Middle School, Stamford, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Love Bombers by Gloria D. Mikowitz.
Dell, 1982. 199 pp. $1.95.

The Love Bombers fairly explodes with insights into the manipulative process and power of religious cults. Its protagonist Jeremy Gordon, an upper-middle class Jewish boy, turns to the Church of the World as an escape from the pressures of family and college after a disastrous final exam week. Initially, he agrees to attend a dinner and discussion session, but once there is almost hypnotically "love bombed" into a longer commitment. Jeremy's sister Jenna, ten months his junior and the only family member he can relate to, senses a strangeness in his telephone calls and letters home and becomes alarmed. She enlists the aid of a mutual friend to try to find Jeremy and discover exactly what is going on despite several obstacles the group puts in their way. The story line gains power from the author's use of point of view. Miklowitz divides the book into three parts: "Jenna," "Jeremy," and "The Confrontation," and allows the reader to follow the same incident from alternate viewpoints. This technique provides the English teacher with an ideal opportunity for literary analysis and writing assignments. Indeed, The Love Bombers would make a fine addition to the classroom library of any high school English teacher.

Reviewed by Judith Hinkle, Brien McMahon High School, South Norwalk, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Paterson.
Avon Flare, 1981. 175 pp. $1.95.

On a small island in Chesapeake Bay, Louise hears her cantankerous grandmother's taunt: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated...." Louise is the unloved twin; Caroline, the beloved. Healthy from the beginning of life, Louise never gives her parents a moment's worry but yearns for the attention that Caroline receives because she is the gifted, weaker, and almost died at birth. Talented Caroline sings and goes to the mainland for lessons. Overshadowed by her sister, Louise turns from the pursuits in which Caroline excels to learn crabbing and follow the waterways like her father. Though challenging enough for a girl, crabbing cannot fulfill the dreams of the woman Louise is becoming. Jacob Have I Loved begins in 1941, but even the radio news of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor pulls the twins together only for a moment. Their differences pull them apart. Not until she leaves the island of her birth, achieves confidence in her abilities, and gains a new perspective, does she understand the total humanness of her parents' reaction to herself and Caroline. As a novel for junior high school, or older readers, this 1981 winner of the Newbery Award and School Library Journal Best Book of the Year is simply wonderful.

Reviewed by Randeane Tetu, Middlesex Community College.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Executioner by Jay Bennett.
Avon, 1982. 174 pp. $2.25.

Four high school kids drive home from a winter beer party. The car hits a tree and the driver is killed. From this all too familiar incident Jay Bennett builds a rapidly unfolding and rather transparent tale of terror and revenge. Somebody out there considers the three survivors sinners who must be executed--at least this is what Bruce, the protagonist, thinks. But who is it? It might be the victim's college-aged brother; or their father, the town cop; or the owner of the bar, who was run out of business by the town council in an angry post-accident reaction. Or it might be the victim's girlfriend; or the fundamentalist minister who Bruce thinks has returned after a long absence. Or maybe it is Bruce's own madness that imagines the revenge, for no one will believe Bruce's stories of threats by the minister or of mysterious phone calls. Even the reader begins to question the boy's sanity. The story, then, turns out to be a whodunit, to be read rapidly, appropriate for grades 7-12. The writing is preponderantly dialogue, with events seen mainly through Bruce's eyes. Except for Bruce, however, there is little character development. The story does suggest the unending consequences of such a teenage tragedy; but the reader who gets hooked is probably interested in finding out, not how the community adjusts to the deaths of the young people, but simply "whodunit?" and "(how) will Bruce survive?"

Reviewed by Richard Zahner, Bunnell High School, Stratford, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

About David by Susan Beth Pfeffer.
Dell, 1982. 173 pp. $1.95.

About David, like so many books for and about adolescents, is a book about the pain of living, of being young, of the pressures from parents and of the fear of not being good enough to measure up. What makes this novel unique is that David's pain made him murder his parents and then take his own life, leaving behind a burden of pain and unanswered questions for his friends and classmates and most deeply to his oldest friend Lynn, through whose journal entries the story unfolds. Suspense is created through the questions as to David's motivations and through Lynn's inability to remember their lunch time conversation on David's last day of life. Even as Lynn strains to remember their talk, she fears the answer to her question as to whether there was anything she could have done to prevent what happened. Finally, through David's own journals, which he willed to her, she comes to a better understanding of David and to an acceptance of herself and her emotions. With its believable characters, genuine feelings and valuable insights, this is a good book not only for all high school students but for anyone who enjoys a story well told.

Reviewed by Joyce G. Don, Manchester High School, Manchester, CT

Using Dramatics With Literature

Mary Ann Reynolds

Once, in my youth, I made the mistake of assigning "The Most Dangerous Game" to a class of ninth graders. They regarded me with a mixture of pity and disgust while one kind child whispered to me, "We read that last year with Mr. Deveney." Judging from the attitude of the class, I had suggested something obscene. Indeed in their minds I had suggested the obscene--the rereading of a story. Who but a madwoman or an English teacher would reread a short story, a book, a cereal box, or anything? Why bother to reread if you know how it turns out? Perhaps even--Why bother to read at all if you can find someone to tell you how it turns out?

Somewhere along the road to higher learning, we are losing our readers of tomorrow. Charged with energy, they stampede into our classrooms, only to be transformed into dullards when confronted with literature. Although most students can comprehend words, phrases, and sentences as they relate to plot and can dutifully regurgitate information relevant to that plot, they often view the whole activity as a necessary evil which one must endure in order to answer the questions at the end of the chapter. Approaching a short story or novel as they would science texts, students hunt assiduously for information and seem genuinely puzzled when informed that more is expected. Meanwhile the teacher searches the class vainly for a laugh, a tear, a sigh, any reaction at all that would signal response to an experience rather than mechanical stockpiling of plot details.

Visit any pre-school or primary grade and you will see delightfully involved readers, taking pleasure in new stories and old alike, believing, questioning, predicting, anticipating, acting out. Visit later our secondary schools and assess what has been lost during the growth process. Naturally, reading does continue through the later grades, but often note taking and fact finding have replaced the joy and involvement. The ability of the child to respond totally has been replaced by grim plodding. Although reading speed increases and vocabulary power grows as the student progresses through grade school, delight and belief evaporate. Without these, there can be no response or reflection, and reading literature becomes an empty ritual.

In their early years young readers thrive on the dramatic element that literature shares with life, and each story, each poem, is lived and relived with gusto. In later years the gathering of information gains in importance, and responsiveness begins

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to wane. Teachers and students have much to gain from laying aside the note-taking and plot summaries and focusing once again on the "dramatic" that lies at the core of good literature. Under the surface layer of words literature contains another layer of meaning which is revealed in expressions, gestures, and movements. Close examination of the vital, nonverbal world of meaning can bridge the gap between the printed word and the student's consciousness, leading to belief, response, and reflection. Otherwise, we might as well forego the teaching of literature entirely and give our students plot outlines of great works to be memorized for later testing.

PRELIMINARIES

In this process, which is really a process of relearning, tone, facial expression, gesture, movement, pause, and silence become tools for the teacher to breathe life into the reading experience. Often, large pictures of different faces provide a simple, convenient starting point. If students can collect pictures of expressive faces from magazines, labeling the back with the suggested emotion or mood, then the class as a whole can study the faces and discuss the emotion in each face. As a further activity, students should pinpoint exactly what about the expression suggests the emotion: a turn of the mouth, a narrowing of the eyes, a lift of the eyebrows. After the class has warmed to this type of activity, individuals should be requested to portray a given emotion for the class to identify, using no words, only facial expressions. Activities such as these, although simple, prepare the class for active participation in later projects.

From faces alone the class can make a smooth transition to more general body language, or all of the many ways we can reveal our thoughts, hopes, and feelings without words. For a week the students should keep a record of the non-verbal communication they observe in teachers, family, friends, and themselves. At the end of the week, the class together can review and assess the basic areas of agreement. A summary of some sort should result. For example:

EYES -	shine, sparkle	happy
	narrow	jealous or angry
	wide	surprise, wonder
	cloud	sad, wistful
	heavy-lidded	tired
MOUTH -	smile	happy
	pursed lips	displeased
	set jaw	determined
	wet lips	greed, anticipation
HANDS -	on forehead	worry or despair
	on chin	thinking
	on hips	challenging
	clenched fist	anger

BODY -	standing, legs apart	truculent
	slouched	ashamed, dejected
	shoulders back	pride
	arms crossed on chest	authority

Obviously this is superficial treatment of a broad area, but it is a good starting point. Once students develop this way of looking at material, the rest follows naturally. Once begun, the records should remain handy, for students will continue to add to them from week to week with examples from life and literature, most of which will be shared with the class. Soon the class will become adept at recognizing and identifying much more sophisticated forms of non-verbal communication.

As a final preparatory warm-up, the teacher can direct the class to devote a week to observing and recording silence, which often communicates so much more than words. At school and at home the observer must note not simply when the silence occurred but also what it communicated, since our aim is to relearn that silence can signify grief, happiness, fear, peace, wonder, or simply confusion, and silence can encompass the whole range of human experiences. Edgar Lee Masters' fine poem, "Silence," is an excellent companion piece to this subject and explores the scope and depth of human silence which often speaks of that which words cannot.

SILENT SCENES

Now aware of the significance of the nonverbal in a work, the students can play a more active role in what they read. Brief scenes from a short story or novel can provide youngsters with an opportunity to become part of what they read while developing appreciation for the depth of a work. Usually scenes with suggestive actions but few or no words encourage the fullest participation because the absence of words lessens stage fright and leaves the demonstrators free to concentrate on expressions and movements. One note of warning: the choice of the actual scene to be presented must remain with the teacher, at least temporarily. Students new to this approach will select a scene containing murder and meyhem, and what follows will make The Godfather look tame. On the other hand, the teacher knows instinctively which scenes present the most opportunity for development and reflection. Fortunately this activity counters the deleterious effect of the speed reading craze which students equate with good reading and which standardized tests reward. Halting the frenetic forward movement to focus on one moment of the action prods students to delve beneath the surface, beneath the particulars of time and place, to a timeless area where the subject matter concerns every member of the human race.

The short story "Bargain" by A.B. Guthrie, Jr. contains a perfect scene right at the beginning of the story. In this story, Mr. Baumer, an immigrant storekeeper, must confront the town's drunken bully with an overdue bill for merchandise.

> Mr. Baumer didn't see him until he was almost on him, and then he stopped and fingered through the bills until he found the right one. He stepped up to Slade and held it out.
>
> Slade said, 'What's this, Dutchie?'
>
> Mr. Baumer had to tilt his head up to talk to him.
>
> 'You know vat it is.'
>
> Slade just said, 'Yeah?' You never could tell from his face what went on inside his skull...
>
> 'It is a bill,' Mr. Baumer said. 'I tell you before it is a it is a bill. For twenty-vun dollars and fifty cents.'
>
> 'You know what I do with bills, don't you, Dutchie?' Slade asked.
>
> Mr. Baumer didn't answer the question. He said, 'For merchandise.'
>
> Slade took the envelope from Mr. Baumer's hand and squeezed it up in his fist and let it drop on the plank sidewalk, Not saying anything, he reached down and took Mr. Baumer's nose between the knuckles of his fingers and twisted it up into his eyes. That was all. That was all at the time.
>
> [A.B. Guthrie, Jr., "Baragin." Exploring Literature, ed. Walter Havighurst (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), pp. 400-401.]

After the class read the passage, books are closed and two volunteers slowly pantomime the action, skipping the dialogue entirely and improvising with any appropriate movements or gestures. The student Baumer must emphasize Slade's size by looking up to him yet must at the same time convey by a certain set of the shoulders and jaw the dogged determination that fuels little storekeepers. Often, in the first presentation, the student Slade will begin to look at the bill, but someone in the class will usually immediately perceive that Slade would probably not even look at the bill since that would acknowledge its validity, and he or she will direct the players accordingly. What exactly would Slade do with the bill? Since our students are encouraged to improvise, often Slade will choose to rip the bill up, slowly, cruelly, and drop it piece by piece. At other times he chooses to crumple it in his fist, right up close to Baumer's face, and then drop it at his feet or fling it disdainfully. Usually the class treasures the part where Slade twists Baumer's nose, but it has proven wise to suggest a less violent alternative, since one Slade nearly performed a nasal amputation in my class one day. Slade can simply sweep Baumer effortlessly out of the way with one arm, or he can just turn and walk away as if Baumer were worth no effort at all. In the actual story Baumer stoops and picks up the bill (or the remnants), smoothes it out and repockets it. The significance of this action as it relates to Baumer's character must not be lost, and when it is performed slowly, with bruised dignity, by our student Baumer, everyone hurts for this gentle, meticulous man. If the bill has been ripped to shreads, Baumer simply retrieves the debris, which is just as effective.

During this and similar activities the teacher must insure
group participation by encouraging suggestions and giving the
volunteers time to try different students' versions of how a
scene should be played. Many variations should be considered
and attempte with the class as the final authority on what works
and what dosn't. Gestures and expressions can be easily added
and discardd. When a suggestion misses the mark completely,
youngsters earn firsthand the complexities of composing. Usu-
ally all th participants enjoy this whole process so much that
they are loth to return to the text, but return they must, to a
text that cncerns everyone who has ever been bullied and abused.
Now the seting moves beyond Moon Dance, Montana, and is transformed
into anyplae where small, decent people try to buck the odds.

Obvioully, because of the limited length of a short story,
every scenewith potential cannot be presented. Preferably the
class will imit itself to one, leaving time and space for the
actual stor to weave its own spell. Although this particular
scene occur early in the story, this placement is not necessary.
At any poin before the climax of the story the action can be
halted to alow for the development of a scene. Hopefully, the
selected scne, like the scene between Baumer and Slade, will pro-
vide insigt into the characters and their conflicts while spurring
the class s individuals to reflect on the people, their problems,
and the signficance of the story. After about twenty or thirty
minutes (sometimes much less) the class will usually have gleaned
all it can and despite protestations should proceed.

Scene involving any sort of ritual always evoke response from
the player and the class. The ritual itself necessitates certain
prescribedactions to which the students can add as the scene pro-
ceeds. Fo example, in Gina Berriault's short story "The Stone Boy,"
nine-year-ld Arnold has accidently shot and killed his only brother,
Eugie. Inone scene half way through the story, Arnold sits in the
corner of he parlor as the neighbors file in to pay their respects.
This simpl scene demands little yet yields much. While our stu-
dent Arnol huddles dumbly in his corner, the student mourners of-
fer gesturs of comfort or grief to his parents, totally ignoring
this boy whse own guilt and grief have isolated him from the rest
of the word. A darkened classroom, perhaps with just one candle
lit, creats instant atmosphere. The effect is devastating. The
hush in th class acknowledges Arnold's mute horror, and his help-
lessness bcomes the isolation of every man in the face of sense-
less tragey.

SCRIPTED SCENES

Durin the scenes discussed so far, students are encouraged
to add wors as they wish, but usually the scenes remain primarily
non verbaluntil dialogue is forcibly introduced. Instead of plung-
ing into iprovised dialogue, it is less threatening to begin with
a "script, yet always with the understanding that lines may be
altered, epanded, or excluded, if the participants wish. When the

class has read almost to the selected scene, the books are placed aside. Then a mimeographed script made up of lines copied verbatim from the story is distributed to everyone. After a few minutes spent reading the script and making notes, volunteers proceed to stage the scene, adding inflection, facial expressions, gestures, pauses, even paraphrasing or expanding dialogue if they wish. Naturally, minor staging details must be settled by the players before they begin. The following sample, shortened for the sake of space, is taken from Ring Lardner's "Champion." Here, the boxing champion, Midge, prepares to fire Tom, his manager. Tom's years of faithful service mean nothing to Midge whose small brain and large muscles make him a formidable opponent. After being summoned by Midge, Tom enters Midge's hotel room.

Tom What'll it be?

Midge Haley, twenty-five per cent's a whole lot o' money!

Tom I guess I got it comin', ain't I?

Midge I don't see how you figger it. I don't see where you're worth it to me.

Tom Well, I didn't expect nothin' like this. I thought you was satisfied with the bargain. I don't want to beat nobody out o' nothin', but I don't see where you could have got anybody else that would of did all I done for you.

Midge Sure, that's all right. You done a lot for me in Philly. And you got good money for it, didn't you?

Tom I ain't makin' no holler. Still and all, the big money's still ahead of us yet. And if it hadn't been for me, you wouldn't of never got within grabbin' distance.

Midge Oh, I guess I could of went along all right. Who was it that hung that left on the Dutchman's jaw, me or you?

Tom Yes, but you wouldn't been in the ring with the Dutchman if it wasn't for how I handled you.

Midge Well, this won't get us nowheres. The idear is that you ain't worth no twenty-five per cent now and it don't make no difference what come off a year or two ago.

Tom Don't it? I'd say it made a whole lot of difference.

Midge Well, I say it don't and I guess that settles it.

[Ring Lardner, "Champion," The Best Short Stories of Ring Lardner. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957). p. 121.]

Since nothing but dialogue is included in the script, students become authors as well as players and directors. Participants must determine how to convey Tom's lack of awareness as he enters the room and his growing incredulity when he realizes what Midge is about to do. On the other hand Midge must project total self absorption with animal-like cunning in handling a weaker member of the same species. Usually students want Midge to be sitting as Tom enters the room, possibly perusing old press clippings, or filing his nails. At any rate Midge's position and actions must relegate Tom to a position of supreme unimportance. Other students' suggestions for Midge include hands on hips (I don't see how you figger it); Midge's pointing to himself, then to Tom (Who was it that hung that left...me or you); and leaning back with arms crossed (that settles it). For for most part Tom's gestures suggest confusion and helplessness (head scratching, shifting weight, long pauses). Frequently, overeager players want to alter the script, and they are given complete leeway to do so, with my sincere apologies to Ring Lardner. When the actual reading does continue, the class can compare its best version with the author's version. In their delightful innocence, they usually prefer their own, and I, not being addicted to truth, agree with them.

WRITING

When the class is working on a longer reading assignment, a novel or a piece of non-fiction, written assignments can coordinate these classroom activities and, at the same time, continue to direct student attention to the significance of the nonverbal. A typical week's assignment, along with the reading, would be given as follows: In each assigned chapter find one passage that contains nonverbal communication. On one side of your paper, copy the passage with the page number. On the other side write your own explanation of what it signifies. The sample that follows is taken from T.H. White's The Once and Future King which abounds in passages rich with the nonverbal.

Quote	Comment
I found this sword stuck in a stone, outside a church, said Arthur. 'It was stuck in an anvil... It was a sort of war memorial.' Sir Kay stared at him for several seconds in amazement, opened his mouth, shut it again, licked his lips, then turned his back and plunged through the crowd. He was looking for Sir Ector. [T.H. White, The Once and Future King (New York: Berkley Publishing Corporation, 1966.) p. 205]	Kay immediately recognizes the sword and what it represents. He almost blurts out the truth, but his devious nature gets the best of him and instead he runs to his father to pretend the sword is his.

Often students prove remarkably adept at locating passages such as these, and this assignment should be used for future class activity. Just the quotes alone, the best selected from the homework assignments, should be mimeographed and distributed without the accompanying comments. Then the whole group can discuss the nonverbal elements and what each might signify. Naturally, everyone will not always agree on what each detail reveals, which is just as well. Both teacher and class must bear in mind that a definitive answer is not the goal. Rather the goal is to visualize the scene in the imagination and to remain aware of its many possibilities.

DIALOGUE

Thus far, students have been called upon mainly to use nonverbal communication rather than verbal with which to improvise. They have simply added phrases or short sentences to accompany gestures or have made slight changes in a dialogue taken from a text. Now that the class has become familiar with such activities and comfortable with themselves, the teacher will want to demand more verbal response, retaining the nonverbal but creating all the dialogue as well. By this point the class will usually offer little resistance to the increased difficulty of the task. In words that contain formal language or exotic setting, improvised dialogue aids comprehension and belief. For example, in Barbara Picard's "The Vengeance of Achilles" old Priam, the king of Troy, goes by night to the Greek camp to beg Achilles for the body of Priam's son, Hector. Achilles is reputed to be merciless. He himself swore to the dying Hector that vultures would devour his body. What words of Priam's could ever move Achilles' heart of iron? The class "hams" will be fighting over these roles, but trial and error have proven that it's best to have the whole class pair off and take five minutes for each pair to produce its own dialogue. The teacher must allow each pair to present their improvisation more than once because the first run-through is usually rough. By the second or third time through, the players will not have to read from the notes that they made but can simply refer to them from time to time. Not surprisingly, since children know a great deal about love and loss, quite a few in the class usually discern what Priam's argument will be: As a son yourself, consider how your own father would feel. Achilles, realizing he is doomed to die in Troy and will never return home, ponders the sadness of all final parting and relents. Consider the actual scene.

> "In the name of your own father and in the name of immortal Thetis, your mother, have mercy, great Achilles, and give back to Priam, that most wretched king, the body of Hector, his son. A great ransom have I brought you for him; do not refuse it." The tears streamed down his cheeks, and he could hardly speak for weeping. He clasped Achilles' hands and said, "I implore you, have pity on an old man who must humble himself and kneel to one who has slain so many of his sons."
>
> Achilles, much moved, gently loosed the old king's clasp and put him from him. His eyes were filled with tears, and he turned his head away, thinking how his

> father, Peleus, would wait in vain for his homecoming. "I shall never see my father or my own land again," he thought. Then he thought how he would never again see Patroclus, a far greater grief than any other, and the tears would not be denied. And so they wept together: Achilles for his father and his friend, with the old king crouched at his feet weeping for his son. [Barbara Picard, "The Vengeance of Achilles," Discovering Literature, ed. Elizabeth Janeway (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 231.]

When the class returns to the text, students will want to discuss how close their ideas were to the plea voiced by Priam. Also, the class will note the significance of the beautiful, formalized gestures in this piece and consider the effort it would take for a king to clasp the hands of one who had killed all of his sons, save one. Although most of us will never see Greece or visit the ruins of Troy, we have seen enough of parting to share in the tears shed in Achilles' tent that night.

In this, as in the other activities outlined here, our goal is to transform the short story, the novel, the poem, into something experienced, not simply read, for reading like writing is an ongoing process rather than an activity that terminates with the final period. Close attention to the nonverbal elements in literature along with improvisation yields satisfying results. Students quickly learn to draw inferences when reading because focus on expressions, gestures, and movements forces conclusions about characters' real thoughts, feelings, and motives. Also, this mode of analysis motivates youngsters to read more reflectively, seeing that the conflicts and tensions in literature relate directly to their lives, and all lives. Once students connect art to life, it is a short step from the particular to the universal. Finally, brief classroom improvisations force personal involvement. While two or three students "become" people in the story, other students suggest gestures, expressions, or dialogue to create belief--the belief that is at the heart of response. As always, the teacher's goal remains increased awareness, for without this even the greatest of books is worth no more than its Hymarx outline.

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PAPERBACK REVIEW

The Elephant Tree by Harriet Luger.
Dell, 1982. 94 pp. $1.75.

There are probably thousands of twelve and thirteen-year-old boys who will love The Elephant Tree. It has all the necessary ingredients to attract that elusive reading audience. Most importantly, it is short. There are no girls to sully the plot with silly romantic glop, and there is a lot of action. The basic story line revolves around a young juvenile delinquent named Dave Starr. He and a small group of similar delinquents are enrolled in a big brother type of program as a last chance at rehabilitation before being sent to juvenile court. During Easter vacation week, the boys are taken out on the desert for a camp out, chaperoned by "college dude," muscle-bound Ted and the older "Pop" Sloan. On a dare to prove their bravery, Dave and his arch-enemy Louie steal Ted's new jeep and take it out into the desert night for a joy ride. Naturally, the jeep gets stuck, the boys get lost, and all the tough guy exterior of both melts away in the pounding desert sun. Not to worry. They are rescued when "Pop" spots their clothes hanging in an elephant tree. For unenthusiatic 7th or 8th grade boys, this book is terrific. However, for a novel to be used in class, for any reason, forget it. The characters are shallow, the plot predictable, and the dialogue obviously that of a woman trying to sound like a hard-nosed city boy.

Reviewed by Philip M. Connors, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School, Enfield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Lori by Gloria Goldreich,
Dell, 1980. 220 pp. $1.75.

Lori is Lori Mandell, a sixteen-year-old who is expelled for a year from her posh private school. Her offence? Smoking marijuana in the girls' room and getting caught. Her parents, like those in many YA novels, are too preoccupied with their own careers and lives to really know what to do with Lori. Fortunately, her all-knowing, German-born grandfather comes up with the perfect solution: Lori will spend a year in Israel with the family of his old friend Avraham Macovi. This is the action of the first twenty pages of the book. The next 200 pages give the reader Lori's first person account of what it's like to be a sixteen-year-old American Jew living in Israel today. Most boys will not enjoy this book because nothing really happens; it's B-O-R-I-N-G! However, I think many girls in the thirteen to sixteen-year-old range will like it very much. Not only does Goldreich give the reader an informative view of Israeli life, but she also adds the element of romance for Lori as well as several other young girls in the story. One of the romances even tackles the problem of a black-white relationship, Israeli style.

Reviewed by Philip M. Connors, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School, Enfield, CT.

Making Connections: Theater And English

Helen Sheehy

Theatre people borrow freely from the other arts and from the more traditional English areas in creating and teaching theatre. Theatre people tend to have the pragmatic attitude "If it works, use it." In turn, the English curriculum can be enriched by borrowing from theatre and using practical theatre techniques to explore and explicate literature and to write creatively and critically--in essence, making the abstract concrete.

The touchstone for the teaching techniques and exercises outlined here is active, emotional involvement. Through direct experience with the material, the students have an emotional, immediate response and then they can begin to intellectually evaluate--"Why did I feel this way?" Working with three-dimensional theatre techniques can illuminate the two-dimensional world of reading and writing. Theatre techniques give deeper insight into materials and urge responsibility for one's own learning.

No special tools or materials are needed for the following exercises. Just push back the desks and begin. The classroom becomes a theatre with students playing roles of both actors and audience members. It is important that students develop skills not only as participants, but also as audience members where observation, concentration, and critical judgement are stressed. In both of these roles the students gain insight into "what worked" rather than concentrating on value judgements of "good" and "bad." The teacher might ask "What did the exercise do for you and to you, and what did you come away with?"

Improvisational techniques are used in the exercises as a means to an end. Improvisation, unlike theatre based on the written word, grows out of actors' behaviour. The literary theatre evolves from the playwright's words. The actors then find the actions to extend the words, thereby creating the meaning and emotion of the play. Words, in all their subtleties and shades of meaning are central to English and theatre study. The context of words, however, is just as important and is the topic of the first "connection." The exercises are called "connections" because they link activities with abstract concepts used in writing and analyzing literature.

CONNECTION #1: OPENING DOORS

Ask each of your students to plan a short situation (one to

Helen Sheehy, Director of Educational Programs at the Hartford Stage Company, taught theatre and English for ten years. Her textbook, ALL ABOUT THEATRE, was published by Independent School Press in 1981.

three minutes) in which they open a door. They must have a reason for opening the door and that reason is communicated to the audience through specific action choices. Each student performs his/her situation while audience members observe. (Note: All action is mimed. No real properties or set pieces are used.) Each student then chooses one of the scenes and develops it into a written vignette. These written vignettes are then shared as the scenes were shared. The students discover the infinite number of choices available in the simplest action. They begin to see that meaning changes as action is modified and structure shifted. They see a connection between specific actions and specifics in writing.

I recall two student performances of Connection #1 which motivated imaginative writing and stimulated classroom discussions of character, narrative structure, active details, metaphor, and theme. In our discussions and in their writing, the students imagined different endings and varied structures which led to lively discussions of choice.

In the first situation a jaunty, young man is walking down a city street. He enters a door, closes it with a flourish, and we soon discover that he is in a bookstore. Consulting a list, he checks off the books he finds, handling them carefully and respectfully. Placing the books to one side, he looks in his wallet, and we see that he does not have enough money to pay for the books. For a moment, we see that he is considering stealing them, but he soon places them carefully back on the shelves and exits through the door with all the energy gone from his body. He takes one last look at the bookstore, walks away, and after crumpling the list, tosses it into a trash can.

The second situation begins with the student curled up in a corner of the classroom. Soon she begins to stretch her arms and legs, and we see that she is a baby. She struggles to walk, and finally toddles to a small door and after trial and error she manages to open it. The girl progresses through various stages of life opening one door after another (the doors becoming larger and more substantial.) In the middle of the scene she is a tired, middle-aged woman laden with packages, and by the end she is a weak, frail old lady who cannot manage to open the last, very large, door. It seems to overpower her. She lies down and curls up into the same position she was in at the beginning of the scene.

CONNECTION #2: DIALOGUE

In this exercise, students work with a simple dialogue. They discover that the meaning of the dialogue shifts as the context shifts. The literal, surface meaning of the lines is overshadowed by the deeper subtext. Again, they see that writing as well as acting is making a series of specific choices to accomplish a particular purpose.

Choose an acting partner for each student or ask the students to select a partner. They select one of the following dialogues and plan a situation in which the dialogue might occur. Punctuation marks have been deleted in the dialogues so that punctuation may be added to fit the circumstances. The students decide who they are and their reasons for saying the lines. The lines have a literal, surface meaning, but the undermeaning, or subtext, changes as the situations and characters change. The students learn the lines, practice, and then perform. Discussion after the performances is important and strengthens the connection between a student's immediate emotional response to material and the intellectual evaluation of "Why did the scene affect me that way?"

Dialogue X

A. Is it time

B. Yeah

A. Great

B. Isn't it

A. Really

B. Okay

A. Right

B. Let's go

Dialogue Y

A. Hiya

B. Hi

A. How are things

B. Things

A. Things

B. Fine

A. Everything

B. Everything

A. See ya later

Dialogue Z

A. Good morning

B. Hello

A. Have you said anything

B. No

A. Good

B. Morning

Several pairs of students in one class chose Dialogue X. One couple acted out a hectic, very funny scene of a young husband taking his pregnant wife to the hospital. Another couple presented an ironic "last march" of a prisoner on death row. These exercises sparked our discussions of comedy and irony in writing and how they are achieved. As a follow-up assignment in Connection #2, the students might select one of the performances and write a short story to share with the class.

CONNECTION #3: ATMOSPHERE

This exercise helps students develop skills in visualizing the atmosphere of a novel, short story, or play and allows them to experience how atmosphere influences plot, theme, and character. In the theatre as in literature, lighting and setting are extremely important in understanding and experiencing the work. Stage lighting illuminates, provides atmosphere, and creates environment. The set of a play conveys information to the audience on a conscious and subconscious level. The use of color and details of furnishings can tell us a great deal about the characters in a play. When reading a play, the set and lighting must be imagined, but in a novel or story the author provides the details of atmosphere which are then experienced by the reader. Dickens in GREAT EXPECTATIONS, for example, uses environment as an extension of character. Miss Havisham's house with its barred windows, dark corridors, and rank, overgrown garden reflects her own, decaying, twisted personality. Her abstract mental state become tangible through Dickens' use of setting.

After dividing the class into groups of three or four, ask them to improvise a situation using the following set and lighting requirements. In their preparation they plan a situation and characters that are appropriate for their particular "atmosphere." They plan actions for each character and reasons for those actions. They do not need to write out the dialogue, but may improvise dialogue as the action unfolds.

A. A living room after an all-night teen-age party. The sun has just risen and is streaming in through one of the windows.

B. A living room in the year 2100 in New York City at 2:00 in the afternoon. All of the light in the room comes from a greenish tube placed in the middle of the room.

C. A living room in a deserted, decaying house on the Connecticut shore. It is just dusk.

D. A "typical" living room with a television. Lighting comes from lamps and the television set. It is evening.

After the scenes are performed, discuss the feelings that the audience had while watching the scenes. Discuss other choices that might be made and examine how the mood changes as the choices change. The students then use the scenes as a springboard for writing short stories, vignettes, or poetry.

With my students, the "typical" living room set often led to scenes of domestic conflict. One group, however, presented an expressionistic piece with a huge television set that overpowered and controlled the family. This is from students who have not seen or heard about expressionism, much less Elmer Rice's THE ADDING MACHINE. Three students performed a poignant piece in the "deserted, decaying house on the Connecticut shore." (C) A boy and girl (we learn from their dialogue that they are newlyweds) stand looking at the house. The girl does not want to live there. The boy replies that it was given to him by his grandmother, and it's all they can afford. They enter the house, not speaking to each other, and soon find that the electricity does not work. They snap at each other and begin to take dustcovers off the furniture. The other member of the group knocks on the door, startling the couple. He walks into the room and we see that he is quite old. He explains that he's a neighbor and it is soon revealed that he knew the grandmother who owned the house. He shows the couple a trunk full of old photographs and scrapbooks. He then goes to the kitchen to find some candles. The couple sit across the room from one another trying to see the pictures in the dim light. The old man returns with the candles, lights them, and sits down and asks the couple to join him where they can see the pictures better.

They look at the pictures together and then the old man leaves after promising to come back and visit. The couple wave at him from the doorway and the scene ends.

In discussing the scene afterward, the "wife" in the scene said "We didn't plan the scene to end the way it did. The couple were not going to make up and the neighbor was going to drive the wife into town to take the bus home. But when we got in the scene and he lit the candles and we looked at the pictures together, it just didn't feel right for the wife to leave." The "imaginary" candles changed the mood of the scene and the outcome. This led to discussions of not forcing characters or plot lines in acting and writing. In acting and writing, improvisation can often lead to fresh ideas and new approaches.

CONNECTION #4: SURVIVORS

Certain novels (LORD OF THE FLIES, BRAVE NEW WORLD, 1984, ANIMAL FARM) lend themselves to simulation exercises. Instead of beginning the novel unit with a lecture about the author and themes, the simulation exercises motivate the class to want to read the novel and provide a springboard for discussion.

Divide the class into two or three groups and outline the following situation: The members of each group are survivors of a shipwreck and stranded on an island. There is little hope of rescue and also the possibility that they might be the only people left in the world. The island has water, birds, small animals, vegetation, and fruit. Ask each group to plan a situation which illustrates their life and survival on the island. Each group has time to discuss the situation and plan actions and characters to present to the class. They do not need to write out dialogue, but they do need to have a specific set of actions planned. They perform the scenes. Discussion afterward might center on contrasting or comparing the choices of each group.

The first time I used the "Survivors" connection, I asked the class if anyone had read LORD OF THE FLIES. One boy, a shy, scholarly type raised his hand. I spoke to him privately and asked that he not divulge any information about the book. He agreed. I divided the class into two groups--one all boys, the other girls. Everything was going along just fine--the girls decided to become vegetarians, govern by committee, and in general, live happily ever after. The boys, on the other hand, were soon dominated by three members of the football team who decided that they should rule. They were going to hunt for food and make spears and knives. The shy boy protested the killing of animals and was rudely expelled from the group. He exclaimed, obviously upset, but also excited, "It's just like the book! It's just like the book!" This activity provided rich material for discussion and values clarification as we began to discover the book together.

CONNECTION #5: CHOICES

Dramatic literature, with so much left to the discretion of the director and designers has many interpretive possibilities. A director's decision shapes the way an actor plays a part and in doing so, alters the meaning and feeling of the play.

(The following activity can be adapted for other plays.)

After reading and discussing A DOLL'S HOUSE by Ibsen, divide the class into groups of three each. Each group will have two actors (Torvald and Nora) and a director. If the class does not divide equally into groups of three, a director may double as an actor. Each group will stage and perform the last few pages of the play. For example, at the end of A DOLL'S HOUSE, Nora leaves her husband and children. The stage directions simply say "She goes out." Now, there are many ways to "go out" depending upon how the character of Nora is played. Nora may pick up her suitcase, walk forcefully to the door and exit, slamming the door behind her, never looking back. Or she may slowly pick up her suitcase, walk to the door, turn and take one last look at the room and Torvald, her husband, then turn, and exit--and so on. Staging decisions will be based on the group's analysis of the play and characters. After the performances, discussion should center on the reasons for specific staging choices and whether those reasons are supported by the text. This results not only in further insight into the play, but also in the discovery that in every play the playwright selects words and the director chooses actions to convey the meaning and emotion embodied in the play.

When beginning rehearsals for a play, directors often begin with costume designs and set designs to give the actors a visual, sensual picture of the play. Also, in period play looking at art from the period can give a sense of reality and depth. The same techniques can be used in teaching plays. Asking your students to consider Nora's costumes in A DOLL'S HOUSE is a good way to probe deeper into Nora's character. For example, in the beginning of the play, Nora might wear bright, frilly clothes--like colorful plumage. By the end of the play her colorful plumage is plucked away to reveal her darker, more serious, adult nature which is reflected in her choice of dress.

CONNECTION #6: THE REAL WORD

English students who write for the school's literary magazine and newspaper know the joy of connecting with an audience. Those students as well as the other 95% of the student body should be encouraged to connect with other class members in performing and written work. They should be exhorted to go to see plays, to talk to actors about their roles and interpretation of their roles, to talk to writers about their craft, and to translate those experiences into their own writing and analysis.

At the Hartford Stage Company we do several new plays a year. The playwrights are usually very open in discussing their craft and sharing their writing experiences with students. They all make the point, however, that their experiences are personal and might work for them but not necessarily work for someone else.

Jaston Williams, Joe Sears, and Ed Howard collaborated on the writing of their social satire, GREATER TUNA. Ed Howard says "The play started with the characters. We didn't have a plot or a formal structure. We started with the characters and thought: 'What would the character do in this situation?' We also used improvisation to develop scenes." Beth Henley (CRIMES OF THE HEART, THE WAKE OF JAMEY FOSTER) keeps a spiral notebook and a smaller notepad with her constantly. She jots down observations, bits of conversation, and ideas for dialogue and plots. She says "almost everything in my plays is something I've heard of, seen, or know about." She does not set out to write a play with a conscious plan, but she might have a particular image for the end of a play. For example, in CRIMES OF THE HEART, she saw the play ending with the three sisters laughing and eating birthday cake. She visualized the ending of THE WAKE OF JAMEY FOSTER (a man playing the spoons) before she had determined how the characters would arrive at that end. When asked if she had any advice for aspiring young writers, Henley said, "Learn to listen and observe."

For students, finding the connections between their immediate emotional responses and abstract literary experiences makes the learning process active, joyous, and within their grasp. They discover that true education is action rather than being acting upon.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

A Tangle of Roots by Barbara Girion.
Dell, 1981. 158 pp. $1.75.

While the complete means to untangling her life after her mother dies suddenly are not fully given, sixteen-year-old Beth Frankle manages to grow up in Barbara Girion's A Tangle of Roots. This easily-read and quickly-paced novel revolves around a young Jewish girl in New Jersey who eventually deals maturely with her mother's unexpected death, her grandmother's constant interference, her boyfriend's growing distance, and her father's lonliness. Like her mother in several ways, Beth learns to adjust to the death and to the new single status of her father. Both daughter and father learn to dare new relationships with others and with themselves without trampling on the past. Symbolically, they untangle the past to set up new roots for the future. The concept of family is a strong one in this novel and offers a paradigm of the bonds--not the entangling binds--an adolescent shares with family members. Not overly sentimental, A Tangle of Roots may bring a tear or two and would appeal especially to average female readers in grades eight to ten, particularly if they understand the ethnic diction in reference to certain Jewish holidays and customs.

Reviewed by Norma D. Walrath, Ledyard High School, Ledyard, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The People Therein by Mildred Lee.
Signet Vista, 1982. 230 pp. $1.95.

Lanthy Farr is a young girl living the sheltered life of a mountain person in Dewfall Gap, North Carolina. Into her secluded world comes Andrew Thorndike, a "foreigner" from Boston. Although he is far older than she, their romance blossoms and grows, but very slowly; mountain customs in 1910 were firm and no change was very rapid. During the course of their unusual relationship, the reader learns much about Lanthy's feelings and ideas and mountain ways. The People Therein is a delightful, beautifully written story, but I'm not sure it says much to today's young people. Lanthy and the other characters are too different for a teenager of today to identify with. Although Lanthy suffers some of the same problems of a young girl today, her approach is dated and restricted by her lack of education and worldly awareness. Young female readers will probably enjoy the story but view it more as historical fiction and thus not identify with Lanthy or her problems. For example, Lanthy views her pregnancy without marriage and Drew's sudden departure in a very mature and trusting fashion. She has to face only her family and a few occasional neighbors--no school friends, no close neighbors, no doctors. Her secluded world allows her to bear her child with only the immediate but short-lived stigma of illegitimacy. The reader believes as does Lanthy that Drew will return, and he does and "they live happily ever after."

Reviewed by Janet T. Murphy, Northwest Catholic High School,
West Hartford, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

High and Outside by Linnea A. Due.
Bantam, 1982. 195 pp. $1.95.

To the casual observer, seventeen-year-old Niki Etchen seems to have the world at her agile fingertips. Star pitcher for the school softball team, sports editor of the paper, and owner of the highest SAT scores in the junior class, she would seem a most unlikely prospect for A.A. But somewhere life has thrown her a curve. Perhaps her family's lifestyle holds the explanation: Taught by her father to drink wine at fourteen and to mix cocktails at sixteen, Niki ruefully tells us: "We all floated around like separate tankers off on long journeys, only getting together at cocktail hour and dinner to refuel." Cocktail hour is soon augmented by solo drinking bouts with a closeted bottle of gin and a six-pack from the bar refrig. Inevitably come the blackouts, the shakes, and the vehement denials of any problem. It is only after the drunken Niki savagely beats her best friend that she admits her need for help. At a time when many states are raising the legal drinking age, this book packs a 150-proof wallop. Its intelligent treatment of a serious problem is enhanced by frank dialog, fast action, and credible situations told in the first person. Junior and senior high schoolers will find themselves rooting for Niki to win this big one!

Reviewed by Barbara Guerra, Newington High School, Newington, CT.

Role Playing: Teaching Literature Dramatically

Norma Walrath

Role-playing is what we do almost automatically, instinctively. As teachers we dramatize a point in our lectures; as parents we serve as models for our children; as committee members we show independence of thought yet a willingness to compromise; and as counselors we give advice and listen to our students and fellow teachers. Working out the various "roles" we play as adults allows us to deal effectively with our varied responsibilities in our often hectic lives. This role-switching helps us to be objective rather than emotional, to be listeners rather than asserters, and also to be more reasonable rather than stubborn. Most important, when we don the hat of a particular role, we learn of perspective which enables us to be considerate of others' varying points of view.

Considering others is essential in the classroom for teachers and for students. In my own teaching, when a student voices his opinion about a sensitive issue, abortion or nuclear weaponry, for example, my role as classroom discussion moderator takes precedence over my personal stands. I allow the student to assert his viewpoint without "forcing" my own. Awareness of my "role" as moderator or Devil's Advocate rather than as participant has sharpened my sensitivity and objectivity in handling discussions.

Role-playing takes on several forms in the school. Role-playing activities that come most naturally in the classroom may be simply using a particular gesture or voice intonation that a character or literary figure under discussion might use. (Mark Twain speaks slowly with slight drawl and Emerson with a "proper" Bostonian eloquence.) We may read a passage from a novel or short story just as we believe the character may have said it. Lennie, in *Of Mice and Men*, for example, whines out George's name. ("I never meant no harm, George.") I also "act out" the idea of George leading Lennie around like a ringmaster with a circus bear and hunch my shoulders over, scrambling after mice as Lennie may have done. In any case I try to choose the most emotional or significant scenes, ones that most clearly dramatize the "gist" of the points I am trying to make in class.

Poetry readings offer illimitable chances to "role-play" as the expansive Walt Whitman or the somber-toned Poe or the casual, Yankee-lipped Frost. In fact, through our role-playing, we are bringing literature to life, making it "real" for ourselves and

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for our students and making it fun! (My Lennie rendition always gets a laugh as well as my Stephanie Crawford screeching in To Kill A Mockingbird.) When I read Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!"--"My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will...."--raw, tearful emotion comes out just as Frost's "Desert Places"--"The loneliness includes me unawares."--evokes a contemplative silence. Drama in the English classroom does not restrict itself to theatre games or the reading of plays, although these are also useful teaching strategies. There is enough of a "ham" in all of us to "ham it up" in the classroom, even with poetry.

Not only teachers but also kids love to "act out" ("up" too) in the right classroom atmosphere. The purpose of most role-playing activities is to get students to understand character motivation and point of view as well as to clarify plot, theme and tone. Students seem to do this so much more intensely and independently if they are personally involved. The following are some activities I have used that were effective with high school students.

ROLE PLAYING ACTIVITIES

Panel Discussion: After the whole class has discussed a book, usually a novel, certain students are assigned character roles, including one as the author who is the moderator for the panel discussion. Students in the audience then start asking pertinent questions (which were previously prepared) of the individual characters. For example, one year in my class Mark Twain moderated a panel consisting of Jim, Miss Watson, Aunt Sally, Huck, Tom Sawyer, Judge Thatcher and Pap. Topics discussed were racism, invididual rights, the role of women and others. As could be expected, Pap and Judge Thatcher argued about money and liquor, and Miss Watson and Jim about slavery while Twain reminded them to behave in the presence of others. The key to the success of this activity is to keep all participants in character--to act, think and answer as if they were their character. It was also enlightening to see the subtleties of fiction and tone emerge in how the characters acted toward each other on the panel. Naturally no one favored Pap!

Acting Out Scenes From A Novel: This is a group activity especially good for "average" classes where the stronger personalities will encourage others to participate. The class splits into four (or more or less depending on class size and the number of strong acting personalities) acting troupes. Each troupe selects an important scene or dialogue from different parts of the novel all have read. The troupe decides which scene to perform, assigns roles and parts to individual members, rehearses and performs for the class. Especially for slower classes, this activity brings the book to life. Students are encouraged to select passages like these that have much dialogue and action and which were crucial to the development of the plot or theme. One year my tenth graders enacted scenes from Mr. and Mrs. Bo-Jo Jones--the arguments with the parents, the scene at the hospital, and the decision of the young couple to stay together.

Giving Speeches: As a way to summarize a whole year's work in American Literature taught chronologically, I assigned student speeches for the last week of school. Not only did students have to give a five-minute speech about a contemporary issue of their choice, but they also had to write and deliver it as one of the authors we had studied. Students selected their author from a master list ranging from Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin to Faulkner and e.e. cummings.

Results were better than expected. Who could have thought that William Cullen Bryant, so quiet and so eloquent in "Thanatopsis" really cared about nuclear power or that Franklin's witticisms about frugality could so true in a speech on "How to Get Into College Today." Emily Dickinson even brought her white dress and gingerbread basket! What a way to review for the year!

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Autumn Street by Lois Lowry.
Dell, 1982. 175 pp. $1.95.

Death occurs twice in Autumn Street and claims a child each time--one naturally, the other, violently. Aberration, illness of old age, and disfiguring injury also occur, but the rich humanity of life assimilates these sad and sometimes evil developments in Lois Lowry's beautifully wrought novel. Its title is not only a place name but also form and metaphor of this wonderfully literate book. Like the season for which it is named, Autumn Street is a gloriously colorful avenue on which all nature travels between living and dying. It is also a memory down which the narrator returns to childhood. Elizabeth is six when she moves with her mother and sister to her grandparents' home while her father is away at war. An artist, she paints the neighborhood with watercolors and words, shaping vibrant portraits of its inhabitants. Two of these are the cook, Tatie, and her grandson, Charles, whom Elizabeth loves almost immediately. With him she explores the texture of life on Autumn Street throughout her first summer there. When fall and first grade separate the two children, their deep friendship seems threatened. After an early winter snowfall, struggling to reassure Charles of her devotion, Elizabeth goes sledding with him at the far end of the street. Taunted by older boys and still unsure of Elizabeth's friendship, Charles trudges angrily into the woods, which have been forbidden territory. He does not return and later is found murdered. Slowly overcoming her grief and despair, Elizabeth closes her story with love and hope. Throughout the entire narration, Elizabeth's six-year-old wisdom is steeped in innocence and sensitivity, and is as alive with joy and humor as it is anguished by pain and loss. Thoughtful middle and high school students as well as parents and teachers will revel in the allegory of Autumn Street.

Reviewed by Mary Anne Zak, Suffield High School, Suffield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

I'm Still Me by Betty Jean Lifton.
Bantam, 1981. 200 pp. $1.95.

When Lori Elkins is given a history assignment to research her family tree, she panics. Being adopted, she has felt "alone and out of connection with anyone for years." Determined to dig up her biological roots, Lori enlists the help of best friend, Maggie, current flame Chris, and concerned neighbors, Sue and Tony. The author weaves a tangled tale as Lori writes letters, sets up appointments with adoption agencies, and secretly rides the train to New York City where she is welcomed happily by her "real" mother. Surely, young adults can identify with Lori as she fantasizes about her beginnings: "I am a princess separated from my real parents who will come for me some day." Or, "My poverty-stricken movie star parents lovingly gave me to a family who could raise me in comfort." And teenagers will rejoice with Lori's successful search. What might have happened may cross the minds of adolescent readers. Only fleetingly does the author allude to possible sadder consequences for Lori—being rejected by her "real" parents or deeply hurting the parents who adopted and raised her. In writing this, her first novel, Betty Lifton, an adoptee herself, has drawn meaningfully on her own life experiences and those of other adoptees.

Reviewed by Gay R. Langlois, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School,
Enfield, CT.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume.
Dell, 1982. 222 pp. $2.50.

High school teachers usually know four things about Judy Blume: 1) most of her books--e.g., *Blubber* and *Superfudge*--are concerned with the lives of pre-teenagers and are thus inappropriate for high school use; 2) *Wifey* is an adult book, *very* adult, and thus inappropriate for high school use; 3) her one previous teenage-level book, *Forever*, deals exclusively and explicitly with teenage sex and is thus inappropriate for use in many high schools; 4) every teenager has read one or all of Blume's books. High School teachers can now breathe a sigh of relief: *Tiger Eyes* is ideal for high school use. Fifteen-year-old Davey Wexler moves temporarily to New Mexico with her mother and younger brother after her father is killed in a robbery of his 7-11 store in Atlantic City, NJ. There she must cope with over-protective relatives, an alcoholic friend, her withdrawn mother, a new and unusual school, and her own repressed feelings of loss. Aided by a sensitive male friend and the beauty of the canyons around Los Alamos, Davey gains the strength to move ahead with her life. Blume's latest novel is readable, teachable, contains nothing overtly sexual, and is sure to take its place among the best of recent YA literature. It deserves respect and serious attention.

Reviewed by Don Gallo, CCSC.

Why Didn't They Listen?

Margaret Grove Ferry

The directions to my high school English class were straightforward. "I want you to listen to the first side of a recording of a 1938 radio broadcast called THE WAR OF THE WORLDS and take notes. Our assignment this week will be to use the notes and write a summary." Tchaikovsky's theme opened The Mercury Theater's broadcast and the voice of Orsen Welles began:

> We know now that in the early years of the 20th century this world was being watched closely by intelligence greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own. We know now that as human beings busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacence people went to and fro over the earth.... (Howard Koch, The Panic Broadcast: The Whole Story of Orson Welles' Legendary Radio Show, New York: Avon Books, 1970, pp. 33-34.)

During the first minute of the recording I watched students squirm and yawn. In the next few seconds the mesmerizing Welles voice continued: "On this particular evening, Oct. 30th, the Crossley service estimated that thirty-two million people were listening in on radios" (Koch, p. 34). A few students in the back row had finished shading in the W in THE WAR OF THE WORLDS; front row pencils were still poised. Was anyone in the class listenging? In the next seven minutes of the recording there were giggles during the Ramon Raquello musical interruptions and frowns during the weather reports. Ten minutes from the start of the broadcast when the semi-hysterical voice of Carl Phillips described the invasion, pencils started to move:

> A humped shape is rising out of the pit. I can make out a small beam of light against a mirror. What's that? There's a jet of flame springing from that mirror, and it leaps right at the advancing men. It strikes them head on! Good

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> lord, they're turning into flames! (Screams
> and unearthly shrieks).
> Now the whole field's caught fire. (Explosion)
> The woods...the barns...The gas tanks of automobiles...it's spreading everywhere. It's coming this way. About twenty yards to my right...
> (Crash of microphone...and then dead silence.)
> (Koch, pp. 51-52.)

Student answers to my questions at the end of the class proved they understood the first part of the invasion story. When asked about the music and narration at the start of the program, not many remembered hearing it.

I had trouble starting class the next day because students had gathered around the record's dust cover reading it and talking about it. Newspaper headlines, drawings, maps, and photographs decorated the front, back, and inside of the cover.

FAKE RADIO 'WAR' STIRS TERROR THROUGH U.S.

WOMAN TRIES SUICIDE

IT'S A MASSACRE

Everyone listened and took notes during the second part of the recording. After class the crowd gathered around my desk and the record jacket with even more questions: "Why were those listeners scared by what they heard on the radio? Were they stupid?" I countered with: "Why don't you ask your parents or relatives about the broadcast. See what you can find out about it for tomorrow."

The following day, Bradley, who had been failing my spelling tests all year, slipped me a note before class: "My gradma said that she ran out and hide in the root sellar cause she thought it was really happened that night. She saw the smoke and smelled it." Vickie brought in a library copy of H.G. Wells' THE WAR OF THE WORLDS and asked, "Why are the city names different in this book?" Her questions began a series of others--"How many people died in the panic? Could you read us some of the news reports?" The class and I shared information and questions about the broadcast. First we wrote summaries of the invasion then published a class newspaper changing our stories to newspaper reports. By the end of the school year five people had read H.G. Wells' novel. Collected interviews with relatives became a part of our class published yearbook. In the spring the class wrote and staged a radio call-in show with "Orson Welles" hosting. The Mercury Theater of The Air program had appealed to a variety of interests.

Interested in the phenomenon of the program myself and still wondering why students didn't listen to the first five minutes of the broadcast, I did some investigation of my own that summer. I read William Manchester's THE GLORY AND THE

DREAM (Little, Brown, and Co., 1973), a popular history of the United States, where the program is included in the chapter, "A Shadow of Primitive Terror," and used as an example of the nervous national atmosphere before W.W. II. Another discovery was the collection of writings, THE PANIC BROADCAST: THE WHOLE STORY OF ORSON WELLES' LEGENDARY RADIO SHOW (Avon Books, 1970) which included interviews with Arthur C. Clark and the 1970 citizens of Grover's Mills, a facsmile of 1938 news reports, a personal account of Howard Koch's writing of the script, and a reproduction of the original script. I began revising my use of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS in my new teaching assignment--senior English.

I planned to move from student written summaries, stories and reports to writing that would evaluate the script and answer questions about why the radio audience had believed on that Oct. 30th evening. After my own reading and investigation, especially Manchester's account of the broadcast, I realized that the 1938 listeners had been radio dial twisters and did not hear the first part of the program. Instead they listened to Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergan, switching to the middle of the frantic Phillip's description. I began our class investigation as before with the same basic instructions. We took notes, discussed the story, and wrote rough drafts of our summaries. Again I asked about the beginning of the broadcast which no one had mentioned in class discussion or writing. We tuned in again to the record, listening more closely by taking dictation of the first few minutes of the program so we could really think about not only what the script said but how it said it. We listened attentively to each part of the broadcast. Then we revised our first rough draft summaries. Finally someone said, "You know if they had listened to that part about all the millions listening to their radios..."

The resultant student papers about the broadcast were varied. Many proposed answers for why-they-didn't-listen question. For example, one student wrote how the broadcast used music and sound effects to build suspense and to increase the listener's belief in the realism of the program. Another compared the fast-paced dialogue of the middle part of the program to the more monotonous spoken narration at the beginning and end of the program. Now the students had more questions not only about the broadcast but also about 30's radio programming, W.W. II propaganda, Mar's research, the depression, and the subsequent careers of Orson Welles, Howard Koch, and John Houseman.

I had more ideas for expanding our class work with THE WAR OF THE WORLDS the following year. Using student questions, we investigated other, more complex, answers to the question, "Why didn't they listen?" That summer I had read Hadley Cantril's THE INVASION FROM MARS (Princeton University Press, 1940), a report of the study made by Princeton University staff in which 1938 listeners were polled, surveyed, and interviewed to find causes for the panic. Researchers found that of 6,000,000 listeners, 1,200,000 took the broadcast literally. Transcripts of the interviews are included in the book. In Erik Barnouw's THE

GOLDEN WEB, Vol. II (Oxford, 1968), a history of radio, The Mercury Theater venture is described as part of the pre-commercial drama that did not have the worry of sponsor's censorship. Barnouw's bibliography lead me to Fredrick Allen's SINCE YESTERDAY (Harper and Brother, 1940), a collection of articles analyzing a variety of events during the '30's. Next I checked the late 30's and early 40's volumes of THE READER'S GUIDE TO PERIODICAL LITERATURE and THE NEW YORK TIMES INDEX finding the students could collect information from both newspapers and magazines about the broadcast.

The following year our class investigation of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS proceeded as before except that after the paper analyzing the broadcast was written and discussed, we compiled a class bibliography to help answer further questions. In this way students could practice finding a topic for further research. The variety of ways THE WAR OF THE WORLDS had been written about in the previous assignment had amazed them. Now they were learning by researching that the cause and effect relationship surrounding the broadcast could be written about in a variety of ways too. Their searches helped them to find and limit topics of their own.

In class we shared bibliographies, titles, and notes on our investigations practicing limiting topics using our library discoveries. For our research study assignment topics ranged from, "How Federal Theater Projects of the 1930's Influenced the Radio Broadcasts" to "How Orson Welles Became the Prodigy Announcer of Radio Drama." After looking through newspapers, magazines, and books about the 1930's others investigated topics such as the Lindberg kidnapping, F.D.R.'s fireside chats, and the WPA's federal writing project. Since we were all reading and collecting materials about the same time period the comment--"Here's something that you might be able to use in your paper," was heard often as we made weekly progress reports on our research.

The class dicussion I remember best was about the opening minutes of the broadcast and went something like this:

Student 1: "Remember on the record when Welles says that over 30 million people were listening? What did they hear?"

Student 2: "Well, I was reading something last night that says that most people were listening to Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergan and didn't switch to Welles until after he started talking about the invasion."

Student 3: "Don't forget about Hitler's Nuremburg address. Everyone was jumpy about war."

Student 4: "I read they thought it sounded like Buck Rodger's comics."

Student 5: "They heard 'Grover's Mills' and there was really a Grover's Mills, N.J."

Student 2: "Remember how boring the first part sounded."

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Lions, And Tigers, And English, Oh My!

Allison B. Spitzer

Seventh graders telling the story of their immigration to this country, third graders in lion outfits, and twelfth graders hearing stories of the American West: These students are all using drama as an educational tool which enhances the study of English. These programs, and many more like them were arranged by TAPCO, The Traveling Artists and Performers Company. These programs demonstrate the energy, imagination, and creativity of teachers throughout Connecticut who recognize the value of arts education in the regular curriculum to enhance the teaching of basic skills.

Why is drama in particular used by so many teachers in Connecticut as an exciting and successful tool for the teaching of English? What benefits are derived from working in drama? What issues concern English teachers at nearly every grade level? First, kids love playmaking and rarely outgrow the positive feelings associated with "putting on a play" or "making up a story." When used within the context of the regular curriculum, drama can create positive feelings about school, the study of English, and the literature or writing skills specifically being focused on. Drama also improves self esteem in many young people. Second, drama and English overlap in a variety of areas. Drama deals specifically with feelings, universal themes, character development, attention to detail, perception and sensory awareness, memory, imagination, and spontaneity. Creative dramatics games are also used to increase verbal fluency. Work in historical or social drama often increases vocabulary. Many of these issues are of concern in the normal English curriculum. In the development of writing skills, for example, attention to detail, sensory images, the understanding of theme, tone, and character are crucial.

This article is intended to give a glimpse into some of the remarkably creative approaches to the teaching of English or such basic skills as speaking and listening used by teachers of English in Connecticut. The six examples of drama in the English curriculum which follow are drawn from urban, rural, and suburban classrooms. Both elementary and secondary school students are represented. You will also note a short description of several teacher workshops and assembly programs where drama and related arts activities have been used for enrichment.

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WRITING STIMULUS

Need a stimulous for creative writing? Ten classes in Colchester, Newington, and West Hartford spent one day a week for fourteen weeks working with TAPCO artist Bill Carpenter. Together, they formed "Clown Caravans." Bill asked these students (grade 1-6), "If you were to run away, join a circus or clown troupe, or find yourself in an imaginary land, who would you be?" In response, students developed alternate personae--characters which they developed through drama, pantomime, writing, and art. Students wrote and acted in original science fiction stories, a news interview show, and a charming circus play for other students in the school. Several of the classes wrote bibliographies of their characters and made life size drawings of their "clown characters." Children learned that a play script which would ultimately be videotaped had to be concise and cogent. Many of the classroom teachers who were involved with this program (which was funded through a grant to TAPCO by The Connecticut Commission on the Arts) were so moved by the positive effects of this approach, that they spent the week between each session with the artist helping the students prepare their writing and drama assignments for the next session with Mr. Carpenter. In these cases, the drama and language arts classes became completely integrated!

SPEAKING & WRITING SKILLS

For students at SAND Everywhere School, in Hartford, the opportunity to work outside the classroom on a special project served two purposes: to enhance deficient speaking and writing skills and to win a cash prize if they won first place in the "Original Oratory" contest held at SAND this spring. Through a grant to TAPCO by The Aetna Foundation, SAND arranged for Dale DeLetis to work with interested students for three three-hour sessions. Mr. De Letis is a drama and English teacher who has coached more than one hundred national speech finalists in original oratory and extemporaneous speaking. He is a TAPCO artist who lives in Boston. During the first two sessions students chose their topics and wrote speeches. They learned that a good speech needs a clear introduction, a three point analysis, and a concise conclusion. During their last session with "the coach" they were given pointers on delivery. To deliver an effective speech, posture, projection, and tone must be effectively controlled by the speaker. The final speeches were delivered before the school and a panel of judges selected the winning speech. The program was deemed so successful that Mr. Bosco, the Vice-Principal, wrote to TAPCO "hoping that the program could be repeated in the following year."

Seventh and eighth grade students at Quirk Middle School in Hartford used drama to enhance their speaking skills in quite a different way. These students were new to this country this year. Many of them experienced both culture shock and a tremendous language barrier. Drama specialist Neil Cowan was contracted to work with these students and their teachers to improve students' self-esteem, to help ease the arrival to a new country, and to help them use English in an enjoyable learning environment. Mr. Cowen used non-verbal trust games, exercises in dramatic pantomime and storytelling, and simple songs to accomplish these objectives. Sessions were emotional--there were tears in the first week which gave way to laughter and accomplishment in later weeks. The artist enjoyed the session as much as the students. The sessions were peppered with both Spanish and English. Dino Galiano, Assistant Superintendent of Hartford Schools, remarked, "Nearly every child participated."

STORYTHEATER

"But how can I use drama with my classroom? There's nothing very unusual about my kids this year," you may be thinking. The program highlight which follows shows a traditional use of drama which can be adapted for kindergarden through grade seven. Students at SAND School several years ago worked with drama specialist Allison Spitzer to improve their speaking and listening skills through storytheatre. Through a grant to TAPCO by The Ensworth Foundation, Ms. Sptizer worked once a week for seven weeks with kindergarden and first graders on nursery rhymes, fairytales, and folk tales. The children's slurred or indistinguishable consonants and words became sharpened during the "rehearsal" of these stories for performance. The simple rhymes selected were also appropriate for the beginning reading level of the children. This program encouraged reading (let's read what we acted out), retention (the rhymes and stories were memorized during rehearsal and performance), and clearer articulation (the audience won't be able to hear you if you don't speak clearly!). Longer stories such as Maurice Sendak's Where The Wild Things Are and Gerald McDermott's Anansi The Spider were used during the final sessions. Teacher Rita Chagnon wrote that "the children looked forward to Ms. Spitzer's meeting each week and we plan to use the activities that were a part of the program."

How can you do storytheater with your students? Simply choose an appropriate folktale or rhyme for the age level of your students. Read it aloud, explaining first that they will be acting it out right away and will need to listen carefully. Be familiar with the actual wording and sequence of the story so that you do not have to refer to the book yourself during the session. Rather than assigning roles for each student, designate an area of the room for each character. Ask the students to select the role they wish to play and then, at the same time, ask them all to find the area of the room where their character belongs. As teacher, it is easiest if you serve as narrator during the first few rehearsals. If you are working with young primary students, you will be narrator throughout.

LITERATURE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

TAPCO has arranged a variety of workshops for teachers to encourage the use of drama in the teaching of English. These have included sessions sponsored by The Connecticut Art Education Association as well as by individual towns or single schools. The workshop titles have included titles such as "Integrating the Arts Into

The Standard Curriculum: Drama, Movement, and Writing" and "Literacy and The Urban Child: Techniques in Drama." In these workshops, teachers performed various pieces of literature alone and in groups. They discovered that drama and oral interpretation have their roots in the storyteller, bard, and shaman. Much of our literature was originally sung or spoken (e.g. Homer) and the thrill of performance is accessible to even the youngest child. Poems such as Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" or Evelyn Beyer's "Jump or Jiggle" lend themselves naturally to performance. The important by-products (perhaps the motivation for) these workshops in drama/English is that it's impossible to perform a piece of literature unless the student/performer understands the vocabulary, tone, and central message. Performance demands dissection of literature. As teachers, we can help demystify the study of literature for many students when we look at literature in terms of dramatic performance. Literature, like a play, involves a who, what, where, and when. Literature is carefully selected language which crystalizes a life experience. Difficult poetry or prose can seem less opaque to students when seen from the dramatic point of view.

AUTHORS THROUGH DRAMA

Viewing a dramatic performance as an audience member can also amplify, clarify, and reinforce a student's understanding of an author. At RHAM Junior and Senior High School (Hebron and Marlborough) students saw a production of To Be A Man--To Be A Woman, which is a series of scenes from well known literature about the relationship between men and women. The scenes drawn from Eugene O'Neill, Paddy Chaeyvsky, Arthur Kopit and others were entertaining and might encourage students to read the entire play they were drawn from. Ideally, this program should be brought into a school in conjunction with the Senior English curriculum. In Plainfield, students listened to the songs and stories of The American West as folk-singer Nick Plakias wove the tale of Westward expansion in an engaging, educational performance. One of TAPCO's children's theatre companies offers a program called "Folk Heroes" which includes the legends and songs of Annie Oakley, John Henry, Casey Jones, and Johnney Appelseed. These programs relate well to both the English and social studies curricula at a variety of grade levels. Assembly period doesn't have to be "time out" from learning. It can be used creatively to enrich the regular curriculum.

From these examples, you can see that drama and such related art forms as puppetry, mime and movement, public speaking, and the visual arts are already being used to help children learn to read, speak, and write. A special mime and movement program in Regional School District #10 elicited this comment from one teacher. As she watched a small, shy, girl whose hand was waving furiously in the air as she volunteered to take part in a movement game, the teacher exclaimed, "This is amazing! I haven't been able to get her to volunteer for anything this year until now!" Drama and related activities can draw out the introverted child, can spark the imagination of many, and allows both children and adults the luxury of trying out various personalities, ideas, and roles through the production of "play."

There is no accurate, adequate, quantitative way to measure the benefits derived from the use of drama in the English curriculum. However, it is exciting to see seventh graders who were reading The Story of My Life by Helen Keller build "touch boards", go on "blind walks" and do dramatic games like "What's In The Bag" to improve their sense of touch. These students told the story of Pearl Buck's The Good Earth in drama, and their classroom walls were hung with pastel pictures of the central images of Willa Cather's My Antonia. I have to believe that the vocabulary tests, long reading assignments and difficult days were more palatable for these students and that the literature read in that class will not easily be forgotten. We all tell half-ashamed, funny little stores about "the high school play" or "when I had to give that speech in junior high," or "my poem in the fourth grade assembly." However, these are the things we've carried with us for years. These are things that we grew from.

TAPCO, the Traveling Artists and Performers Company has actively been involved with arts education in Connecticut since 1977. The organization was founded to help educators and parents provide high quality, reasonably priced arts experiences to students throughout the state. In 1981-82, the TAPCO Education Program worked with a pre-screened roster of approximately 130 visual and performing artists in a broad range of art forms who provide performances, workshops, lecture demonstrations, teacher training, and special events to schools. This year TAPCO arranged 1335 events for about 120 schools and served a total audience of about 81,000 students and teachers. TAPCO also serves the larger community, offering programs to churches, libraries, and corporations. For member schools, TAPCO provides a quarterly newsletter and catalogue and conducts a thorough needs assessment and orientation for the staff to help determine the most appropriate artist or performer for the school's needs and budget. Based in Hartford, TAPCO works cooperatively with many arts organizations and with parents, teachers, and administrators to find the most educationally beneficial program for the individual school. Throughout the year, TAPCO is available to act as a liason to the artists and as a resource to teachers for program ideas.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

The War Between the Pitiful Teachers and the Splendid Kids by Stanley Kiesel. Avon, 1982. 207 pp. $2.25.

Kids will have trouble getting this book away from the teachers! That's a pretty good description of the theme for this novel. Skinny Malinky, befriended by a fairy godmother type who is the elderly Black janitress of the school, decides on war with the teachers. It is a war in the style of a medieval joust, with four hilarious battles, all won by the teachers. The penalty for the kids' loss is submission to the machine called the Status Quo Solidifier. It makes the kids over into Perfect Young People, except for Skinny and a coterie of others who, in despair, retreat into the sewers. That's only the beginning. I don't think any of your kids are in this book. Skinny Malinky, the worst of all the kids, is an overdrawn portrait. All the kids, in fact, are caricatures, not characters. They are nevertheless delightful caricatures and richly humorous. The teachers are also caricatures, but they are unfortunately recognizable. I know them all! I am Mr. Snockadocka, the grammarian whose bag is over-sized tree diagrams of grandiloquent sentences. The administrators inhabit offices I frequent. The teachers' lounge is peopled and furnished as in my school, and in yours. Any novel on school warfare, of course, invites comparison with Up the Down Staircase. The difference lies in The War ...'s fantasy base. Mere reality is never permitted to impede the delight of this story. The novel is outrageous, flawed, delightful, funny, biting, scholarly...oh, forget it. Stock your shelves with this one.

Reviewed by Gil Hunt, Manchester High School, Manchester, CT.

Converting Narrative Into Drama: Using The Composing Process To Integrate The Language Arts

Robert Blake

Having students adapt a play from a strongly dramatic short story through the composing process is a natural and powerful way to integrate the language arts. First of all, drama is an immediate and primary language art and is thus easily accessible to all students, especially those who have not had great success with academic reading and writing. Drama, furthermore, is immensely social, an activity for learning how to watch, listen, react, present, discuss, debate, and summarize. And when we use dramatic activities in the classroom, we find they lead naturally to other language activities of two general kinds: _receptive_ activities, those including listening, observing, and beholding and _active_ experiences, those including discussing, reading, writing, creating and presenting.

Adapting a Play from a Short Story

One way to integrate a number of language arts activities through the composing process is by having students convert a short story, in this particular instance, "This I Refute Beelzy" by John Collier, into a one act play. The story is most appropriate for our purposes. First, it is a neat little, fast moving horror tale in which a boy does in his domineering and cruel father through the aid of the character "Beelzy," whose name we take is the familiar form for "Beelzebub," the Greek appellation for the devil, which in turn is derived from the Hebrew "Ba'al ze bub," the ubiquitous and sinister "Lord of the Flies," Second, the story is supremely dramatic. It consists almost entirely of dialogue. There are only four characters, five, if we include Beelzy, whom we never see. The setting of the story is the house of a three-member family, and the action takes place during a very short time, moving from an opening expository scene through swift but deft character development to a rousing climax. In short, an ideal story to be adapted as a play.

Before engaging the students in rewriting this story as a play, we need to think about the several levels of meaning in the story and be aware of some crucial ideas. First off, on one level, the tale is a fantasy, in which the supposedly unreal occurs in the world of the actual. The story stands on its own as a rousing

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yarn, but on another level, the conflict between the boy and his father may represent the conflict between science or rationality and intuition and irrationality. "Thus I Refute Beelzy," furthermore, is related to the study of the "occult," a word from the Latin occultus, originally meaning "to cover up or conceal," which includes supernatural agencies and the knowledge of them like witchcraft, fortune-telling, ESP, astrology, tarot cards, alchemy, voodoo, spiritualism, black and white magic, palmistry, and graphology. All of these studies of the occult have one thing in common: the belief in hidden and mysterious powers.

There is no need to engage the students in an initial discussion of these matters, unless one or two have a background, and then our general information will assist us in helping them discover the richness of this apparently simple story. It's probably sufficient for their enjoyment of a horror story based upon diabolism to know that "Beelzy" appears to be the shortened form of the Greek name for the devil "Beelzebub." They should also know the meaning of the word refute, "to prove wrong," and be prepared to explain the irony in the inability of Big Simon to "refute" Beelzy.

Analyzing the Story

After the students have read the story by themselves or have heard it read out loud in class, they need to come to terms with what happens in it. It is best to have carefully structured questions for guided discussion and to have the students talk about the narrative in small groups, possibly even pairing students, but having no more than four or five in any one group. The small discussion is crucial because only in such groups will each student get feedback from others and in them will all students have experience in the give and take of listening, talking, reacting to feedback, and in adjusting ideas to that feedback. In other words, the students sharpen their communication skills in interacting with each other.

These are some questions we might have the student respond to, arranged simply by the categories of plot "What Happens in the Story?" character "Who Are the People?" and theme "What Are the Ideas" or "What Does It Mean?"

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STORY?

1. At the opening of the story, Mrs. Carter rings the tea bell. What is "tea?" In what country might people have tea?
2. Small Simon spends most of his time in his retreat. Describe it. Tell what Simon does in his retreat.
3. What does Big Simon do to Small Simon when Small Simon refuses to say his friend Beelzy is make-believe?
4. What makes Big Simon so angry that he sends Small Simon to his room?
5. What happens to Big Simon at the end of the story?

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE?

1. What sort of man is Big Simon? What is his "scientific and modern way" of raising a child? Is his "way" really best for the boy? Why or why not?

2. What effect does Mr. Beelzy have upon Small Simon? What do you think will happen to Small Simon with his father gone?

WHAT ARE THE IDEAS?

This story suggests that there are mysterious, unexplainable forces that deeply affect people's lives. Discuss the possibility of the existence of such forces. If they exist, do they operate for good, for evil, or for both? Make a list of things which are good like love, families, hospitals, schools, and charities such as the Red Cross.

Now make a list of things which appear to be evil, like hate, war, robbery, and murder. How are they explained? By the actions of people, or by the influences of forces beyond the understanding of human beings?

Retelling the Story

After they have heard the story read to them or read it for themselves and discussed it in small groups, the students can go on to retell or reshape the story in their own words, thus giving them practice in developing their ability to retell narratives. Here are some guide questions for their retelling of the story.

> What would have happened if Mr. Carter had believed Small Simon and tried to help him escape from Beelzy? Make believe Big Simon knew who Beelzy was and tried to protect Small Simon from him. Retell the story. How would Mr. Carter act? How would he find out about Beelzy? What would happen when Mr. Carter met Beelzy? How would Mr. Carter get rid of Beelzy? What would happen to Small Simon?

Small groups could discuss such proposed changes in the story (or, of course, make up their own changes), outline the new sequence of events, select students to take the parts of the characters, and role play the new scenes. If they have read the story carefully--or have listened intently while it was read out loud--and discussed with other students and their teacher questions about the story, they will find such an activity a pleasant as well as profitable one.

Rewriting the Story as a Play

After this introductory work, the students are ready to convert narrative into drama, to create a play from a short story.

"This story would make a fine short play," we might tell our students as an introduction. "There is a lot of conversation, which makes good dialogue. The action takes place in one house, and it occurs within a short period of time. Here's an example at how you might start writing a play based upon 'Thus I Refute Beelzy.'"

This sample beginning shows the students how straightforward the process is when the original story is as essentially dramatic as Collier's is.

THUS I REFUTE BEELZY
by
John Collier
Adapted from the short story
by
____

Characters
MRS. CARTER
BETTY
SMALL SIMON
BIG SIMON (MR. CARTER)

The scene is the garden-room and tearoom of a tall Georgian house somewhere in England. The walls are cream-washed, a coarse blue net is in the windows, there are canvas-covered armchairs on the stone floor, and a reproduction of Van Gogh's Sunflowers is over the mantlepiece.

MRS. CARTER.	There goes the tea bell. I hope Simon hears it. I'm worried about him.
BETTY.	Oh, I see him now in the garden.
MRS. CARTER.	Yes. That's been his retreat all summer. He stays out there for hours on end.
BETTY.	He seems to be strutting up and down, making wild motions.
MRS. CARTER.	I know. Playing his game. He won't play with the other children anymore. And if I go down there--the temper! And he comes in so tired out!

To help the students in an unobtrusive way with their dramaturgy, we might ask them to pay attention to considerations like these, which deal with setting, changing description to dialogue, turning various scenes into one setting, and revealing how actors and actresses should say their lines.

a. How do I turn description into dialogue? We changed the story description of Small Simon in the garden into a conversation between Mrs. Carter and Betty.

b. How do I keep the action in one place? We moved the two women into the tearoom at the beginning of the play instead of having them walk from the drawing room to the tearoom.

c. How do I suggest to the reader or actor how the characters should talk?

First, we can use punctuation marks to show emphasis and pitch. When Mrs. Carter says "And if I go there--the temper! And he comes in so tired out!" we know that the exclamation marks mean that she is upset and that the pitch of her voice is higher than normal.

Or, we can describe how a person speaks his lines, sometimes using the direct words of the author. In this example, we have used John Collier's directions for how he wished his characters to say their lines.

MR. CARTER. Learn from experience, Small Simon. Tomorrow, do something amusing, and you will not be bored. I want him to learn from experience, Betty. This is my way, the new way.

SMALL SIMON. (Small Simon speaks like an old, tired man, as little boys so often do.) I have learned.

The students would profit at this stage from working in small groups of from two to three students, discussing with each other in a spontaneous manner rather subtle but crucial matters like appropriateness of setting, the necessity of action on and off stage, and the delivery of lines.

For those students who want to create an original play from the story, they should be encouraged to do so with directions like these:

> You may wish to write a play different from the original story, one based on the version which you re-told, with Mr. Carter understanding Small Simon and protecting him from Beelzy. You will need to create new scenes to reflect your new telling of the story.

Once the students have finished their plays, they may present their finished products to an audience of other students. Obviously, the time has been well spent with their sharpening of various communication skills such as reading, writing, discussing, revising, editing, and producing a play and then with listening, witnessing, and reacting to the various versions of the adaptions.

Creating Original Fantasies: Stories or Plays

Once the students have moved through the process of adapting a play from someone else's short story, they are ready and able to create their own fantasies, either dramatic or narrative. The following introductory activity is aimed at helping them choose a commonplace situation close to their experiences, with just a hint of the macabre or occult, and to encourage them to write an original fantasy. They have seen enough tales of the supernatural in the movies or on TV or read them in stories and in comics to know the genre. For those students who need models before they can proceed, they can choose either of the sample beginnings to finish. Those who are more secure will no doubt create their own fresh fantasies.

We give them these directions and two sample beginnings to finish.

> Now you may wish to create your own fantasy. Where will it happen? Who will be the people? What will happen to them?
>
> The fantasy can take place right around where you live. And the people can be just like those that you know very well. The best fantasies are often about commonplace people, whose actions just can't be explained by reason and logic. Here are a few ideas to start you off.
>
> a. Suppose you must pass by a fierce German Shepherd dog on your way home after school and sometimes just before dark after you have been to the neighborhood store. One night, the dog scares you so much that you say out loud, "I wish that dog were dead!"
>
> On your way home, you meet a black cat with strange yellow eyes that seem to glow in the dark. You take the cat in and feed it. The next night you must go to the store. You bring the cat. When you are coming home, it is almost dark. The dog rushes out at you. Backing away, you fall down. The dog leaps at you.
>
> Then you hear a screech, and a tall black creature with glowing yellow eyes comes between you and the dog.
>
> What happens next? Write your fantasy.
>
> b. A new boy moves into your neighborhood and is in your class at school. He is very quiet, and his eyes are wide as if he is staring at something unusual all of the time. But you and he become friends.
>
> One day he says that there will be a grass fire in the lot behind your house that afternoon. You laugh at him, but the grass catches fire. Fire engines come to put it out.
>
> The next day he says that there will be a fire alarm in school and that the firemen will find a blaze in the cafeteria kitchen. You listen but don't say anything. Sure enough, there is a fire at school the next day. It has started in the kitchen among some papers and boxes.

A few days later your friend tells you that one of the houses in your neighborhood will catch fire and burn. And someone may get hurt or die! Whose house is it, you ask. He doesn't know, but it is painted green with black shutters. Your house is green with black shutters.

What happens next? Write your fantasy.

The students work by themselves on their fantasies but then read them out loud to other students in small groups. After they have revised their stories on the basis of reactions by the other students, they can read them out loud or act them out before the entire class.

Learning Communication Skills by Converting Narrative into Drama

By following through these language arts activities for adapting a play from a short story through the composing process, the students have learned a considerable amount about language arts.

First, they have practiced several communication skills. They have read or listened to a strongly dramatic short story read out loud and analyzed key notions of fiction centered on plot, characters, and themes. They have retold and re-created the story in their own words. They have converted the story into a one act play. They have used models to write new fantasies or to create entirely original ones. They have started the unit with the more easily accessible skills of listening, speaking, and discussing and have moved on to the more difficult skills of reading, writing and revising.

Second, the students have followed through the stages in the composing process of gathering specific details, examples, and ideas, of drafting, of getting feedback, and then of further revising until the material has a certain polished form. Only by following this process again and again, will students learn how to revise what they say and write on the basis of feedback from other people, learn how to analyze audiences, relate what they say and write on the basis of this analysis, and quite simply, learn through interaction how to get the business of the world done.

And finally, they have directly and naturally participated in language activities more ancient than history, as old as human beings, and as basic to their welfare as breathing: creating and molding stories and plays.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Waiting for Johnny Miracle by Alice Bach,
Bantam, 1982. 181 pp. $1.95.

If you love General Hospital and cried happily at Ali McGraw's death in Love Story, the plight of Becky Maitland in this book will be a great workout for your sentimentality. If, however, you are capable of being deeply moved by the very real plight of children who must die of cancer, this story is equally for your sincere sentiment. Becky, a good student, a star basketball player, a twin, pretty, and popular, is required to come to terms with a crippling, cancerous tumor in her leg which ends her teen career and forces her to struggle towards adulthood. The story examines Becky's hospital treatment, both surgery and chemotherapy, and her family's problems in terms that they are not at all bathetic. The story is at its best, however, when it involves the dying kids in the cancer ward. Bach's delineation of their attempts to come to grips with constant pain and foreshortened lives brought an occasional furtive tear even to my cynical eyes. (In one highlight of this grim recital, the dying kids watch a TV soap opera about cancer and thoroughly enjoy poking caustic fun at it.) Becky's mother sums up the theme: "...Cancer does change your whole life but it doesn't change every day...." Getting through those every days is the basis of this novel. The story is strong stuff. Alice Bach forces us to face pain and death by cancer in children. Weak readers and those who seek the happy ending should avoid it.

Reviewed by Gil Hunt, Manchester High School, Manchester, CT.

Radio Play Production

Paul R. Corwel

During the time I taught junior high school English, a television soap opera called *The Young and the Restless* became fairly popular. I've since wondered why such a program was not about my students back then. Certainly, the title is perfect. Junior high school students are young, and the vast majority are, no doubt, restless--short attention span, inability to sit quietly for extended periods of time, easily excitable nature. Why should such a title be wasted on adult characters?

I must admit that I have not expended much effort trying to answer this question. I have, however, realized the importance of this restlessness--or liveliness, to state it more positively--when trying to shape an effective English program for these students. Such liveliness demands that an English program be as participation-oriented as possible. Instead of having students spend most of their time in class passively listening to the teacher or even *re*acting to questions, assertions, etc., it makes good sense to engage students in active and creative endeavors.

Drama, because it is a performing art, affords the teacher with many opportunities to involve the class in active learning experiences. An imaginative teacher could construct a variety of these kinds of activities through which students would explore the elements of dramatic communication. One of these activities, to which junior high school students enthusiastically respond, is the production of radio plays.

Implementing a unit on radio play production may seem a burdensome task, but it actually is not. Begin by presenting to your students a professionally made radio play. They will enjoy spending a large part of class listening to an entertaining dialog. Select one which will appeal to your particular group. Mysteries, detective stories, and westerns, because they are so commonly found on television and in movies, are usually effective. Recordings of these plays may be obtained in school libraries, public libraries, or large record stores.

Next, lead the class in a discussion of the play just heard. Keep this discussion focused on the mechanics of the presentation. How did a character's tone of voice change during an emotional scene? In what way was a sound effect achieved? How did the audience discover that the action moved from one place to another? Questions such as these force students to begin considering the methods used to convey information in this form of communication from the point of view of the script writer. Such an insider's point of view is necessary if successful radio plays are to be created.

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Have your students then brainstorm for possible subject matter on which radio plays can be written. Ask students to carefully analyze some of these suggestions. What production problems can be foreseen? Can they be overcome? How? Will the production then be as effective? This discussion reinforces that necessary insider's point of view and offers students ideas for their radio plays.

Group work follows. Its ultimate goal is the actual production of a radio play, but before this can be realized, several intermediate steps must be executed. While these steps are being completed, give students a great deal of guidance. Instead of simply observing and making occasional comments, you must provide clear, detailed, and specific instruction as well as constructive feedback to each group. Without such guidance novice script writers would have little hope of achieving success.

Each group must first select a story which can be effectively told in a radio play format. Warn students not to allow their enthusiasm for a particular idea to blind them to possible production problems inherent in this idea. They must critically evaluate the idea in the same way they analyzed the suggestions from the earlier brainstorming session.

After each group chooses (and you approve) a story idea, provide students with some information which will aid in their writing of the script. Discuss the format in which the script should appear. Provide examples of scripts and let students know that their work should appear in the same form. Spend some time discussing how sound effects can be produced. Set a firm due date for the final copy of the play's written version. Encourage questions about all aspects of this kind of writing. Students will then be well prepared to go ahead and write their scripts.

Script writing takes much class time, but it is important that most or all of the writing occur during class. This allows all members of the group to participate in the creation of dialog. Because a script is a recording of spoken language, even those students who do not perform well on formal writing assignments may achieve some measure of success in this work. Further, successful production of the play requires close teamwork by group members. If each group member contributes to the creation of the script, each member will feel a strong commitment to its successful production.

After scripts are completed and turned in, carefully scrutinize each one. The strengths of each script should, of course, be pointed out. More importantly though, identify those segments of the script which, for one reason or another, need to be revised.

Each group should then spend some time revising their original script. Stress the importance of this step since so many students find rewriting difficult. In addition, meet with each group individually to discuss possible strategies to strengthen the weaknesses already identified.

After all revision work is done, production begins. The radio play should be thoroughly rehearsed before any recording is attempted. Rehearsal allows the actors to become familiar and comfortable with their parts. This familiarity is important. By the end of rehearsals actors should know their parts well enough to concern themselves not with what a particular line is but rather with the sound of the voice when delivering that line. Furthermore, sound effects should be rehearsed along with the dialog. This will ensure a smooth, professional-sounding recording.

Groups are now ready to begin the actual recordings of their radio plays. If your school employs a media specialist, consult this person well in advance of the days you wish to record. Reserve the best recording devices the school has available. The media specialist will either instruct your students in the operation of this equipment or will provide members of the media staff to operate recording devices. If your school has no media specialist, you must learn to work the equipment.

Keep in mind that more than one "take" of the recordings may be necessary. Professional actors in film and television often make mistakes which require the reshooting of scenes. It would be silly to expect students to make perfect recordings on their first tries.

Even after the recordings are done, the most exciting step remains. The class should listen to and discuss each recording. Certainly, students will learn some things about the conventions of radio plays; more importantly, they will derive much satisfaction knowing their peers found their production effective and entertaining. Such a sense of accomplishment reaffirms students' self-esteem and makes them more willing to participate in future creative endeavors.

A unit on radio play production exposes students to a wide variety of ideas, skills, and activities considered important in any good language arts program. Writing and especially speaking skills are developed in such a unit. In addition, such work clearly displays to students the value of revision. Further, a healthy exercise of students' imaginations takes place. They must create a story, determine the strategies they will use to translate this story into an effective dialog, develop interesting characters, and discover ways to create particular sound effects.

More specifically, such a unit teaches students a great deal about the nature of drama. The assignment forces them to see the play from the eyes of the playwright. Students are compelled to identify the methods used to convey a story in the dramatic mode and to test the effectiveness of these methods through the actual production. Radio play production also shows students that characters are of central importance and that only through well written dialog can these characters be effectively developed. Furthermore, students gain an understanding of important dramatic conventions. Using dialog to identify the play's setting and to tell about significant action which would be difficult or impossible to actually present are but two of these conventions.

Although a significant amount of class time is spent completing a unit on radio play productions, the rewards are well worth the investment. Junior high school students enjoy the experience, take pride in their accomplishments, and grow in their understanding of and appreciation for all forms of drama. Try a unit on radio play production; the results will not disappoint you.

PAPERBACK REVIEW

Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson.
Bantam, 1982. 219 pp. $2.95.

If keeping one's "house" in order is an art, then Marilynne Robinson's story of a young girl's disturbing emotional life is truly an artistic book. Not only is the story of Ruth, from a gangly, abandoned child to a lonely, expectant adolescent, sensitively and poignantly told, but Robinson's writing style is graceful and lyrical. The book is full of Biblical allusions, symbols, unusual characterization, and a well-crafted theme of loss, of a haunted existence that devastates a young girl. This is a wonderful book for mature students who desire a thoughtful reading, for teachers who wish to assign a well-written extra novel, or for anyone who wishes to read a slow-paced but absorbing story told by a ghost. Sensitive readers will find it worthy, but the run-of-the-mill adolescent might not wish to reflect upon the memories and thoughts which haunt the three primary characters: Ruth; her sister Lucille, who accepts only concrete reality; and Sylvie, their eccentric, itinerant aunt who comes to their ancestral home to take care of the two young sisters abandoned by their suicidal mother. Throughout the novel Ruth feels the life of "perished things." Her "house" is not in order, and her sense of loss is evident from the first pages. Ruth lives in a haunted existence in her grandmother's house with Sylvie and finally becomes a ghost living a drifter's life with her aunt, blossoming only in darkness, one of the major symbolic motifs of the book. Though this is a ghost story, it is not for scary darkness but rather for quiet contemplation.

Reviewed by Norma Walrath, Ledyard High School, Ledyard, CT.